



## Service – Reliability – Value

In an industry not usually recognized for placing a high priority on customer service, NOVEC seeks to excel. Our mission statement begins, “NOVEC’s mission is to exceed the expectations of our customers and to be the energy provider of choice in the markets we serve.” NOVEC’s business model places customers at the top of our cooperative organizational chart – just where we think they should be! We constantly focus on customer needs and how we can do a better job of delivering your service.

Why is NOVEC so concerned about customer service when we sell electricity only to those who live within our designated service area? As a locally owned and operated cooperative, every customer is an owner of the business. Unlike other electric utilities, your cooperative exists to make sure your needs are met, not just to make a profit.

NOVEC only has direct contact with a few of our 125,000 plus customers – if they come in to our office to pay a bill, request engineering services or complete a transaction with one of our customer service representatives. How then do we learn how they rate the service they receive from NOVEC?

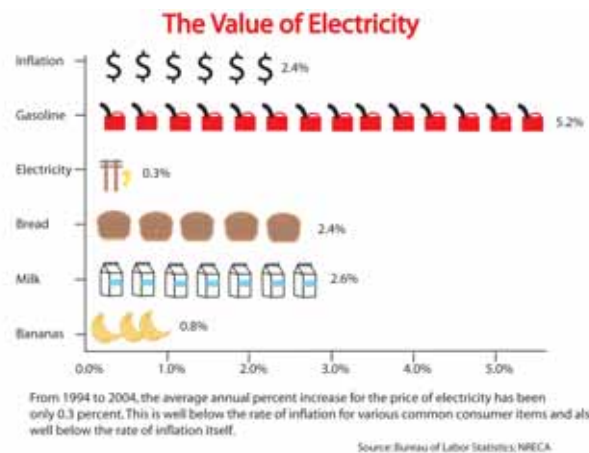
Like many other businesses we periodically survey customers. Why? If we don’t ask, we can’t know how we’re performing. We depend on randomly selected survey respondents to offer the collective wisdom of 125,000 customers. We listen and we respond! We use the data to set up internal mechanisms that generate improved service for our customers. If you are contacted by our contracted agency, we would appreciate it if you would take 10-15 minutes to complete the telephone survey. You can make a difference by helping NOVEC better define the expectations of our customers.

### **Reliability at top of list in survey results**

Service reliability sits atop the list of customer expectations. NOVEC can point with pride to holding the very best record of reliability in the entire metropolitan Washington, D.C. area. However, reliability is more than just a set of numbers. In order to maintain such an enviable record many best practices must be in place: a well-designed electric distribution system, adequate materials for maintenance and new construction, technology, a well-maintained right of way, and knowledgeable people to operate the system – who are also well trained to detect and solve problems when they occur. All of these factored into the result that when you flipped the light switch in your home or business, the power was on 99.987 percent of the time in 2004.

### **Value – a two-pronged priority**

Also ranking high on the list of priorities for NOVEC customers is value. While it is a bit harder to get to the core expectations on this topic, we offer two areas where value should receive attention. First is the value of the product – electricity. It is difficult for any of us to imagine life without electricity and, fortunately, electricity is a very good value in our region. The accompanying chart plots the rate of inflation for a number of products over the past ten years and validates that the cost of electricity has experienced the lowest rate of increase.



The second prong of the value that NOVEC provides has to do with being locally owned and operated. A customer elected board of directors who actually live and work in our communities governs us. We place a high value on connecting to our communities. NOVEC donated more than \$100,000 in 2004 to dozens of non-profit organizations that work to improve the quality of life in local communities. We also returned \$34 million in capital credits to our customers last year; that’s extra money in your pocket to spend on other necessities or donate to a worthy organization in your neighborhood.

### **Service is a proud NOVEC tradition**

At NOVEC, we’re proud of our long tradition of providing reliable electric service and bringing value to our customers. The use of advanced technologies enables us to stand behind our customers 24 hours a day, seven days a week and to be prepared for the future needs of our communities. We’re counting on you to let us know if we don’t live up to your expectations. We want to provide the best customer service along with the highest reliability. Your comments are welcome at [pr@novec.com](mailto:pr@novec.com).

# Home Energy Audits Can Help You Save Money

To help save energy in both the summer and winter, you can perform a basic weatherization audit on your home, as described below. This simple process will help pinpoint places in your home that could benefit from repair or weatherization products, such as weather stripping, caulk or window glazing.

**The first step in weatherizing your home is to gather information. Begin by checking each exterior door for the following most probable leaks:**

1. Are there any noticeable cracks at areas where the door meets the frame?
2. Is there space at the joint between the frame and the interior and exterior walls of the house?
3. Is there a gap between the bottom of the door and the threshold?
4. Is there space between the base of the threshold and the floor underneath?
5. If your door has glass panes, are they properly glazed? Or is the glazing old and cracked or missing entirely? Are any of the panes cracked or broken?
6. If the doors have existing weather stripping, does it need replacement?
7. Does your home have adequate storm doors? And are they properly hung and caulked?

**Next take stock of all the windows:**

- Do you see any moving parts that allow air to leak?
- Are there gaps or flaws in construction around the frame?
- Is the glazing compound around the glass old and cracked or missing entirely?
- Are the seams around the window trim caulked?
- If weather stripping exists, is it in need of replacement?
- Are there any window panes that are cracked or broken that need to be replaced?
- Are the windows that are not

covered with draperies, shades or blinds offering any insulating value?

- Are storm windows installed? And are they properly fitted and caulked, to eliminate gaps where the window meets the framing?



**Once you have covered all the conventional openings to your home, begin looking for other, not so obvious ones. Are there any air leaks around:**

- Foundation cracks or cracks in basement walls?
- Separations between any two materials of the house construction, like an exterior chimney and the house?
- Mail slot?

- Clothes dryer vent?
- Outside light connections?
- TV antenna entry?
- Electrical outlets?
- Cracks and splits in siding?
- Gaps or loose mortar between block, bricks or stone facing?
- Air ducts for heating/cooling system?
- Leaking basement windows?
- Exposed roofing nails?
- Roof flashing?
- Garage doors?

## Energy Saving Maintenance Tips

**Energy leaks from your home in ways other than through openings. How do you rate on energy conservation?**

- Is your furnace properly cleaned and tuned for maximum efficiency?
- Is your air filter clean on your furnace and/or air-conditioner?
- Have you checked the range filter?
- Do you regularly look for dirty or blocked heating/cooling registers?
- Do you set your thermostat too high in winter and too low in summer? NOVEC recommends a setting of 68°F for heating, and 78°F for cooling.
- Is the thermostat broken, worn or dirty? Consider installing a programmable thermostat when you replace it.
- Is your thermostat properly located? A thermostat located too near a heat or cold source or on an outside wall can waste a lot of energy.
- Do you seasonally check for leaks in heating and cooling ducts?
- Is your hot water heater set at an efficient temperature? NOVEC recommends that water heater thermostats be set between 110° F and 120° F.
- Is the hot water heater malfunctioning in any way?

## Online Energy Audit

You can also log onto NOVEC's Web site at [www.novec.com](http://www.novec.com) to perform a quick home energy audit using ENERGY STAR's home energy advisor tool. This tool calculates your home energy usage based on the information you enter. It also provides you with a list of customized energy improvements as well as the estimated savings. ENERGY STAR is a government-backed program helping businesses and individuals protect the environment through superior energy efficiency.



# Work Locally,

Story and Photos by Bob Morrison

# Think Geothermally

**C**hris Pearmund knows the secret of making a great bottle of wine. He is a deep believer in the synergy between the grapes, the land and the skills of the winemaker. “The sign of a truly great bottle of wine is representative of the soil, location and the health of the land. By minimizing our impact on the land we produce a distinctive product unlike any other wine produced anywhere else.” Chris carries that philosophy throughout his entire business, employing natural fertilizers and pesticides, recycling and reusing whenever possible and letting nature warm and cool his store, cellars and other structures.



*Chris Pearmund*

Maximizing energy efficiency and minimizing energy costs were part of Pearmund's business plan from the start. The buildings are designed to make the most of the cooling effects of shade and air circulation in the summer and the sun's heat in the winter. The architecture of the main building and its position on the land allows the sun to strike the windows from late fall through early spring. In the summer, the angle of sunlight is deflected by the long roof overhang keeping the windows and much of the porch in the shade throughout the day.

However, Pearmund's greatest energy savings are the result of a geothermal well. Geexchange (geothermal) heating and cooling technology relies primarily on the Earth's natural thermal energy to heat or cool a dwelling. The only additional energy geexchange systems require is the small amount of electricity used to concentrate what Mother Nature provides and then to circulate high-quality heating and cooling throughout the home.

Geexchange systems work on a different principle than an ordinary furnace/air conditioning system, and they require little maintenance or attention from homeowners. Furnaces must create heat by burning a fuel—typically natural gas, propane, or fuel oil. With geexchange systems, there's no need to create heat, hence no need for chemical combustion. Instead, the Earth's natural heat is collected in winter through a series of pipes, called a loop, installed below the surface of the ground or submersed in a pond or lake. Fluid circulating in the

loop carries this heat to the home. An indoor geexchange system then uses electrically-driven compressors and heat exchangers in a vapor compression cycle—the same principle employed in a refrigerator—to concentrate the Earth's energy and release it inside the home at a higher temperature. In typical systems, duct fans distribute the heat to various rooms. In summer, the process is reversed in order to cool the home. Excess heat is drawn from the home, expelled to the loop, and absorbed by the Earth.

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**“ With the price of a closed 110 volt power source we have 10 tons heating and cooling power at our disposal, and most of the time we use less than 5 tons. Our energy savings have even exceeded my expectations. ”**

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Geexchange systems can be located indoors because there's no need to exchange heat with the outdoor air. They are so quiet and compact homeowners don't even know when they are on. Typically, they are installed in a basement or attic, and some are small enough to fit atop a closet shelf. The indoor location also means the equipment is protected from mechanical breakdowns that could

result from exposure to the elements.

The temperature of the ground or groundwater a few feet beneath the Earth's surface remains relatively constant throughout the year, even though the outdoor air temperature may fluctuate greatly with the change of seasons. At a depth of approximately six feet, the temperature of soil in most of the world's regions remains stable between 45° F and 70° F. This is why well water drawn from below ground tastes so cool even on the hottest summer days.

Pearmund Vineyard's geexchange system provides heating and cooling for a 7500 square foot building. Energy use calculations are that the building would use 12 tons of heating and cooling energy. The actual usage rate is less than 20% of projections. Says Chris, “With the price of a closed 110 volt power source we have 10 tons heating and cooling power at our disposal, and most of the time we use less than 5 tons. Our energy savings have even exceeded my expectations.”

Pearmund Cellars makes a great day trip. While enjoying the perfect climate produced by the geexchange system you can sample some of Virginia's finest wines. Don't miss the Vin de Sol, an old world Sherry style aperitif that is more than worth the drive. In addition to private or group tours during harvesting, blending and other key moments in the life of a winery, Pearmund Cellars also hosts events throughout the year. For more information on special dinners as well as wine and cheese tastings visit [pearmundcellars.com](http://pearmundcellars.com).



*Praised in the Virginia Wine Guide, sold in prestigious retail establishments, and enjoyed by discriminating palates.*

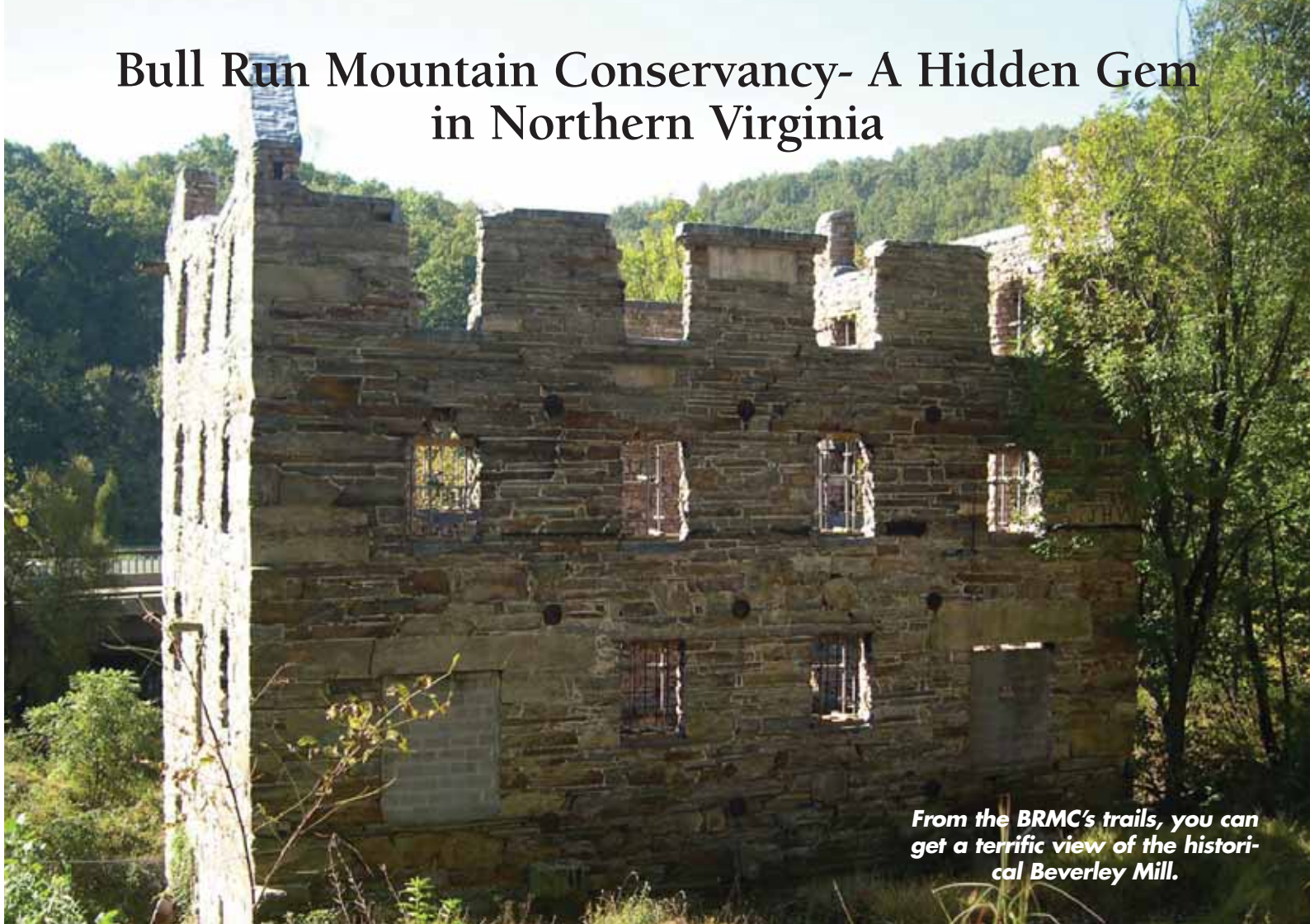


*Pearmund Cellars winery, tasting room and retail store use smart architecture and geothermal energy for maximum heating and cooling efficiency.*



*Pearmund Cellars is located in NOVEC territory in the beautiful foothills of eastern Fauquier County, VA, conveniently close to Northern Virginia and Washington, DC.*

# Bull Run Mountain Conservancy- A Hidden Gem in Northern Virginia



*From the BRMC's trails, you can get a terrific view of the historical Beverley Mill.*

If you're looking for a place to escape from the hustle and bustle of our area, a visit to the Bull Run Mountain Conservancy (BRMC), located next to Beverley Mill, is just what you need. They maintain 10 miles of hiking trails, which are open daily from dawn until dusk. A visit to their trails takes you back to nature as you hike along paths that were once overrun during the Civil War by both Confederate and Union soldiers. You can take a break to view the historic Beverley Mill building and marvel at its immenseness, or you can stop to read the historical markers along the trails.

Formerly Friends of Bull Run, BRMC is a private nonprofit organization founded in 1995 that works to protect the Bull Run Mountains through education, research and stewardship. The mountains are part of an important greenbelt around the nation's capital and their preservation is vital because of their proximity to ever-increasing population and development. BRMC manages public access on the southern 800 acres of the 2,500-acre Bull Run Mountains State Natural Area Preserve.

BRMC provides educational programs on the ecological, historical and cultural features of the Bull Run Mountains. In addition, they work with the Virginia Division of Natural Heritage (DNH) and Environmental Studies at Airlie to offer a wide variety of public education programs. BRMC also offers several different Girl Scout and Boy Scout badge workshops, Eagle Scout projects, and birthday adventures.

Research at BRMC includes conducting a baseline stream study, assisting rattlesnake population monitoring and sponsoring and assisting a moth study.

Public programs offered by BRMC include nature camps, day hikes, a family series, and other programs related to nature, geology or history. BRMC averages two public programs per month, so be sure to visit their web site at [www.brmconservancy.com](http://www.brmconservancy.com), or become a member and receive their calendar along with their quarterly newsletter. Aside from supporting the BRMC's efforts, members are entitled to substantial discounts on programs.

## **BRMC Hiking Trails**

The BRMC trails and natural areas are open to the general public, with the BRMC simply asking that you complete a waiver and follow their use guidelines. The trails are open to foot traffic only and no pets are allowed. Waiver forms, use guidelines, and trail maps can be found at the kiosk at the trail entrance.

Directions to BRMC: Take I-66 West and exit at Route 15 (Haymarket). Turn left at the end of the exit ramp. Turn right at the next light onto Rt. 55 West. Go 2.7 miles. After crossing railroad tracks, take the first right onto Turner Road (crosses over I-66) and then the first left onto Beverley Mill Drive. BRMC is in the building on the left at the end of the road just before Beverley Mill, and the trail entrance is directly across the street.

# Community Service – Responsibility and Privilege

While NOVEC's primary business is the safe and reliable delivery of electricity to our nearly 125,000 customers, we also place a high priority on giving back to the communities that we serve.

In 2004, NOVEC donated more than \$100,000 to a diverse range of community service efforts throughout our service territory. Even more impressive than NOVEC's record of monetary donations is the time and talent volunteered by employees to the numerous causes that NOVEC

supports. Mike Curtis, Vice President of Public Relations commented, "Without their support and enthusiasm, we couldn't accomplish even a small percentage of what we do."

While NOVEC's complete list of donations and community service involvement is impressive, we will highlight a few of the charitable organizations and community service activities that we supported in 2004. Some involved monetary contributions, others voluntary assistance or, in some cases, both.

## **Youth Education**

NOVEC contributed to a number of county education and library foundations, Youth for Tomorrow, Boys and Girls Clubs of Fauquier and of Prince William, 4-H, Boy and Girl Scout Troops, and Big Brothers/Sisters. In addition, ten scholarships totaling \$10,000 were awarded to outstanding high school graduates. Five students received an all-expenses paid opportunity to participate in a legislative Youth Tour and four students were offered scholarships to the Virginia Council of Cooperatives Leadership Conference. NOVEC also contributed to individual schools for science fairs, energy management programs, after-prom parties, field trips and special presentations. Our employees also volunteered at science fairs and school expos, and gave safety demonstrations to school and community groups.

## **Youth Sports**

NOVEC supported various sports



*Employee Bob Buneck volunteered at the BioExpress science outreach program at Stonewall Jackson Middle School – one of NOVEC's education partner schools.*

leagues through team sponsorship or by helping to defray the cost of purchasing uniforms and other equipment. We contributed to high school boosters clubs as well as the Special Olympics.

## **Civic Organizations/Performing Arts**

NOVEC provided support for numerous performing arts groups - symphonies and orchestras, choral and drama groups as well as visual arts organizations. Civic organizations such as Ruritan Club, Lions Club, Rotary Club, Jaycees and others received donations. We also provided support to numerous volunteer fire departments and historical organizations.

## **Health Causes**

A large number of fund-raising events for health-related organizations were supported in 2004, including Alzheimer's Association, American Brain Tumor Association, American Cancer Society, American Diabetes Association, American Heart Association, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, Easter Seals Virginia, Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, Muscular Dystrophy Association, Ronald McDonald House, and The Rainbow Center.

One of NOVEC's best-known community service efforts is our participation in the March of Dimes WalkAmerica. In 2004, one of the top-fundraisers was Manley Garber, chairman of our board of directors. For the tenth successive year he collected the most money in Prince William County, and NOVEC ranked #8 for fundraising in the Washington Metropolitan area.

## **Community/Charitable Organizations**

In 2004, NOVEC donated to community and charitable groups such as local chapters of ACTS, The American Red Cross, Fauquier Family Shelter, Habitat for Humanity, MotherNet Loudoun, The Salvation Army, SERVE and Transitional Housing BARN.

A favorite cause of employees is our adopt-a-family program, when each NOVEC office works with their local social service agency to provide holiday gifts and food for needy

families.

Another favorite is providing entertainment at a holiday party for residents of Birmingham Green nursing home in Manassas. Employees "adopt" residents with no family and provide them with much-needed holiday gifts.

## **Media Partnerships Benefit the Community**

In 2003, NOVEC started a very successful program requiring that all radio and television advertising contracts include a community service component. While promoting NOVEC we are also able to bring recognition to organizations and events that could not otherwise afford to purchase advertising. One example of such a partnership was our sponsorship of the Redskins Game Ball Dedication on W\*USA Channel 9, where donations were made each week to one of three youth-related charities: Youth for Tomorrow, Boys and Girls Clubs of Prince William or Boys and Girls Clubs of Fauquier.

## **NOVEC Recognized for Community Service**

Although we don't pursue community service to win awards, it's nice to be recognized, and in 2004 NOVEC was honored by several groups for our efforts. They include The Manassas Community Concert Association; we received the first Community Outreach Business of the Year Award from the Prince William Regional Chamber of Commerce and were honored for our support of the Prince William Library Foundation's VIVA! Van.



**Dollars For Scholars**

Ten \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded to outstanding graduating high school seniors who receive electricity in their homes from NOVEC. Applications for the scholarships must be completed, postmarked no later than April 8, 2005, and submitted to Donna Snellings, NOVEC Public Relations, P. O. Box 2710, Manassas, VA 20108. Scholarship information and the application are available at [www.novec.com](http://www.novec.com) or you can request an application by e-mail to [dsnellings@novec.com](mailto:dsnellings@novec.com) or by calling 703-392-1511.

**2005 Youth Tour**

Tenth and eleventh grade high school students in NOVEC territory, who have an interest in government and politics, are invited to submit an application to participate in this program. Five students will be selected for an all-expenses paid visit to Washington in the summer of 2005 and Richmond in February of 2006 to observe government in action.

For more information about this program contact Donna Snellings at 703-392-1511 or by e-mail at [dsnellings@novec.com](mailto:dsnellings@novec.com). Information and the application are also available at [www.novec.com](http://www.novec.com).



## Opportunities for Participation



**“Strikes For SERVE” Bowl-a-Thon – Saturday, March 19**

It’s not too late to form a team for this 14th Annual fundraiser to support programs that assist homeless and impoverished individuals in communities in western Prince William County, Manassas and Manassas Park. Lane sponsorships are available as well as slots for 5-person bowling teams. Bowlers are asked to raise \$50 in pledges and will receive three free games, free ball and shoe rental, a t-shirt, and the chance to win exciting door prizes donated by local businesses. For more information, call 703-368-2979.

**“Three Presidents and How They Shaped The Country”**

This free film screening and discussion series is sponsored by the Fairfax County Library’s Center for the Book, with funding provided by NOVEC. The presidencies of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower will be featured. The first program on Roosevelt was held in February. Remaining presentations will be at the Reston Regional Library with George Mason University Professor Harry A. Butowsky leading the discussion. Dates and topics of programs are:

- March 13 Harry S. Truman**
- April 3 Dwight D. Eisenhower**

You may register for the free programs by calling 703-689-2700. Additional information is available at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library).



**Lawn and Garden Show and Sale – Saturday, April 23  
Prince William Fairgrounds**

The Prince William office, Virginia Cooperative Extension Service will present the 6th Annual Spring Fling Lawn and Garden Show and Sale – ‘Roadmap to a Better Landscape’ – on Saturday, April 23, 9a.m.–3p.m. at the Prince William Fairgrounds, rain or shine. Gardening displays, lectures and demonstrations, kid’s activities and Earth Day celebration will be offered free of charge to the public.

**For information call 703-792-6285.**

**“Hula Hoopla” – 6th Annual Fundraising Event for the Prince William Chapter, American Red Cross – Saturday, March 12 – 6 – 11:30 p.m.**

Attire is aloha casual for this event to be held at the Heritage Hunt Golf & Country Club in Gainesville. Grab your friends and come for a great dinner and dancing to the music of Hurricane Johnson. There will be games, a raffle and great items available for purchase at the silent auction. NOVEC’s V.P. of Public Relations, Mike Curtis, is chairing this event. **For tickets and additional information, please call 703-368-4511.**



**American Red Cross**



**Walk America is coming to a location near YOU!**

Use your feet to give premature babies a hand! Join thousands of folks in Northern Virginia who will be walking to save babies! Walk dates and locations in our area include:

- April 17** Prince William County – Loy Harris Pavilion, Center Street, Manassas
- Fauquier County – Airlie Center, Warrenton
- May 1** Loudoun County – Ida Lee Park, Leesburg
- Fairfax County – Lake Fairfax Park, Reston

For additional information about the walk, please call (703) 824-0111 or (800) 326-2229. To register and raise funds online, visit [walkamerica.org](http://walkamerica.org).

**Easter Seals Walk With Me – Saturday, May 7  
Old Mill Park – Fredericksburg, VA  
Sign – in...9 a.m. • Walk begins:...10 a.m.**



Walk With Me is about putting hope within reach for people with disabilities. It’s a chance for event participants, corporate sponsors and the local community to discover the joy of helping others. Funds raised at this event can provide opportunities for the children and adults living with disabilities in Virginia to live with equality, dignity and independence.

Join NOVEC and Virginia’s Easter Seals Ambassador Amy Feuerberg for a walk through historic downtown Fredericksburg. To join Team Army, or for more information about the walk go to <http://va.easterseals.com> or call 866-874-4153.



**Chairman: J. Manley Garber**  
*District 7*  
*Woodbridge/Dale City/Montclair*



**Vice-Chairman: Don M. Middleton**  
*District 2*  
*Loudoun County, South of Rt. 7*



**Secretary: Wade C. House**  
*District 5*  
*Nokesville/Haymarket/Bull Run*



**Treasurer: Walter Grove**  
*District 8*  
*Fauquier/Stafford*



**Malcolm Ames**  
*At Large*



**James Chesley**  
*District 3*  
*Fairfax County, East of Rt. 66*



**Cynthia Gilbride**  
*District 9*  
*Fairfax County, West of Rt. 66*  
*Loudoun County, South Riding*



**Michael Ragan**  
*District 6*  
*Lake Jackson/Buckhall/*  
*Manassas Park/Bristow*



**Ann Wheeler**  
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