



Keeping Current

The Powerful Choice 

Delivering Hometown Service to a Changing Area



NOVEC's territory has changed from rural to predominantly suburban.

October is National Cooperative and Customer Appreciation month. More than 60 years after the formation of the two customer-owned rural electric cooperatives that merged in 1983 to form NOVEC, we now serve one of the fastest-growing regions in the United States. Our early mission was to provide electricity to the farms and hamlets of our territory that existing investor-owned utilities refused to serve because they were too rural and unprofitable. While we continue to serve many of those regions today, our predominant service area is that of rapidly growing suburbia.

NOVEC has changed dramatically as a company from one that served a few thousand in the early 1960s to one that currently serves nearly 130,000 customers. As the tenth-largest electric cooperative in the country, we have evolved into a business that embraces technology to help us work smarter to meet the demands of a rapidly growing, diverse customer base. While adding nearly 6,000 customers per year for the past five years, NOVEC has also enjoyed unprecedented financial stability, allowing us to return more

than \$112 million in CASH BACK credits to you, our customer-owners, during that same period.



"As a quality assurance inspector and a NOVEC representative, my goal is to go beyond the customer's expectations. Our customers motivate our actions, create our ambition and determine our stance in a competitive business environment."
- Eric Munsterman

Appreciating our customers

While much has changed with the way we do business at NOVEC, one thing has remained constant – appreciation for our customers. Their needs and our wish to better serve those needs is a prime consideration when business decisions are made. "Will this provide better service to our customers?" is the question our management team asks before implementing a new program. President/CEO Stan Feuerberg recently stated, "Serving our customers is a privilege we don't take for granted. It is our top priority, a major component of our overall business strategy and a factor in every decision we make."

Traditionally, utilities do not receive high marks for customer service. At NOVEC we plan for it, we measure it, we implement suggestions for change and we track our progress. We set high standards for service and are not easily satisfied with our performance. The entire NOVEC team is dedicated to

improving existing service practices. That is the highest form of customer appreciation!

Appreciation means getting involved in communities

NOVEC has been giving financial support and lending volunteer expertise to organizations in communities across our service area for 60 years. Investing in programs that improve the quality of life is just one way to show appreciation for our customers and their communities. Support for libraries, schools, youth sports, cultural arts, and community service organizations top the list each year.

Sometimes the call for help comes from cooperative communities in distant places. In October 2004, we supported cooperative communities in Florida following a series of deadly hurricanes. Several years ago, cooperative territories in the Dakotas and Minnesota sent out a plea for help following devastating flooding in the Red River Valley. Now, in October 2005, a new plea for help has come from cooperatives in the Gulf Coast regions of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. We will respond to the current need in a timely and appropriate manner. Helping other cooperatives is one of the seven guiding principles of cooperation.

Customers show appreciation to employees

We live in a busy world where most customers don't have or don't take the time to call or write to show appreciation for the good service they receive from NOVEC employees. When they do take the time, it gives a definite boost not only to those singled out for providing the good service but to all employees. Here are a few of the many notes we received in recent months:

"Dear NOVEC,

NOVEC employees who responded to an outage Sunday night, June 26, in the Meadowbrook Woods subdivision of Manassas were efficient, courteous and hardworking. They should be commended for their excellent efforts and ability to communicate effectively during this outage.

We have lived here for three years and have noticed on multiple occasions the positive difference NOVEC makes as an electric provider to this area." *Bill Chrobot*



Mr. Chrobot is referring to NOVEC linemen (left to right) Matt Grenke, Jeff Penner and Norman Tapp.

"Hello NOVEC,

I wanted to pass along a very good experience I had today with Mrs. Brown on your staff. I was paying my bill late by phone and realized I didn't have the account number. I



**"I have always enjoyed helping others, and that is one of the reasons I enjoy working in the field I am in. I am able to provide information to help a customer resolve an issue or complaint."
- Machesha White, operations coordinator**

called to make the payment and a very personable woman named Mrs. Brown helped me by taking my payment and giving me information I needed to make a payment next time; she made my experience very enjoyable.

I just thought I would pass along my good experience to you. I know people only let you know when they are unhappy, so I wanted to let you know that Mrs. Brown made a good impression on me." *Lori Petterson*

Ms. Petterson is referring to Renee Brown, customer service center representative.

"Editor,

I have just completed reading your July *Cooperative Living* magazine from cover to cover and it is definitely the best edition ever ... Keep up the great work." *Joseph M. Scott*

The Public Relations staff appreciates Mr. Scott's comments.

Tracking customer service progress

Each year NOVEC participates in projects with two research firms. They solicit input from our customers, analyze the data and present the results to NOVEC's management team. We appreciate the participants who give information to the researchers. Without their feedback, we would not know whether operational changes that we have made are meeting the needs of our customers, or which new programs or services we should offer.

Customer service satisfaction numbers from a recent market research report, completed in the spring of 2005, place NOVEC in the top 10 of 113 utilities studied across the country. We were in a virtual tie with Duke Power for top ranking in the southern region.

We gathered some very useful information. Our service-reliability record has few peers in the country. We learned that NOVEC's customer base has the highest per-capita income of the 113 utilities studied. The number of customers with access to computers was tops among the group at 91 percent. This was not really a surprise, given that we live in a technology-driven area. The research findings will be extremely helpful to us as we restructure www.novec.com in 2006. We will be studying ways to make it easier and more convenient for our customers to transact business on our Web site.

We don't share this information to toot our horn, but to let you know that customer service is serious business at NOVEC. While it is encouraging that our overall customer satisfaction numbers show improvement in this latest survey, we learned that there are some areas where continued improvement is desirable. Survey results form the basis for many of our short- and long-term corporate goals.

If we don't get it right

Regardless of the company-wide focus on customer service, we recognize there are times when we don't satisfy particular needs of a customer. *continued on page 28*

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Problem-Resolution Procedure

An inquiry and problem-resolution procedure has been established by NOVEC to handle various situations. Cooperative employees involved in the procedure for problem resolution are available during normal working hours from 8:15 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. In addition, many questions can be answered by calling NOVEC's Customer Service Center at (703) 335-0500 or (800) 335-0500 Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

NOVEC is regulated by the State Corporation Commission (SCC). The SCC approves rates, fees and all terms and conditions of service of the Cooperative. You may contact the SCC in the following ways:

Mail: VA SCC, P.O. Box 1197,
Richmond, VA 23218

Phone: Toll-free (800) 552-7945

Fax: (804) 371-9350

Web: <http://ditl.state.va.us/sco>

Cooperative Help in Hurricane Katrina Territories

While the majority of media attention about damage from Hurricane Katrina focused on New Orleans, Biloxi, and the evacuation camps in Houston, cooperative territories in Louisiana and Mississippi were equally hard hit.

At Washington-St. Tammany (WST) Electric Cooperative, headquartered in Franklinton, Louisiana, an estimated 3,500 miles of power lines and poles were blown to the ground leaving 45,000 customers without power. In Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, 56,000 of 66,000 customers were without power. In Mississippi alone 50,000 electric utility poles were destroyed.

How NOVEC is helping

Following the storm NOVEC released contract construction crews to assist in power-restoration efforts in the Gulf Coast region. NOVEC also responded to the request for cash donations to cooperative associations in Mississippi and Louisiana that have established relief funds. The money was distributed to customers and employees of electric cooperatives

whose lives have been tremendously impacted by the storms. At Coast Electric Cooperative in Mississippi between 50 and 60 employees lost their homes.

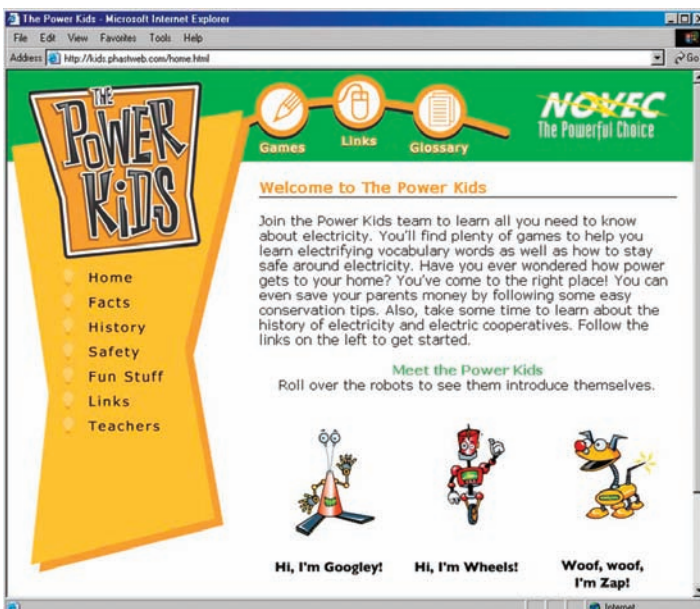
How you can help

You can donate directly to those affected cooperative families through the associations. The Electric Power Association of Mississippi has created the "Katrina Relief Fund." Make checks payable to Electric Power Associations of Mississippi; note that it is for "Katrina Relief Fund" and mail to P.O. Box 3300, Ridgeland, MS 39158. Louisiana has requested that checks be made out to "Hurricane Relief Fund" and mailed to the Association of LA Electric Co-ops (ALEC), 10725 Airline Highway, Baton Rouge, LA 70816.

We know this will be an extensive, prolonged relief effort. Notices are posted on our Web site of ways to help our fellow cooperative friends throughout the difficult months to come.

Cooperatives caring for each other – another of the cooperative principles!

Premiering the Kid's Web Site



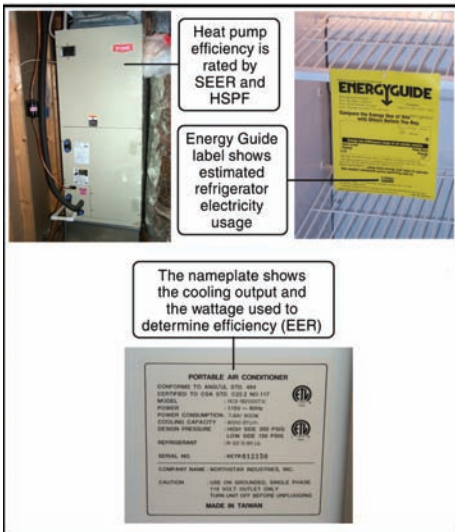
Value-added service is NOVEC's goal, even for our youngest customers.

In partnership with four other cooperatives in the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives (VMDAEC) we are pleased to present "Power Kids."

NOVEC, Central Virginia, Choptank, Northern Neck and Rappahannock cooperatives pooled financial resources and worked with programmer Laura Cotterman of Piedmont Web Development to create a site with a two-fold purpose. It has fun activities for elementary school children, and includes educational information to help them understand the science of electricity – including important safety information to teach children to respect electricity. You can review the site at www.novec.com.

Since all five cooperatives are closely connected to schools in their areas, the Web site is another means to express to educators and parents our commitment to the education of our children. Please check out the site and let us know what you think. Comments can be forwarded to vburginger@novec.com or tpamick@novec.com. You may also call Inia Burginger at (703) 392-1540 or (888) 335-0500, Ext. 1540.

The SEER Puzzle by James Dulley, Contributing Columnist



Using the most efficient appliances and products in your home can significantly cut your utility bills. It will also reduce air pollution, damage to the environment from exploration for and transportation of fuels, and stretch our finite fossil fuel supplies for your children's future needs.

Luckily, the government and the manufacturers' associations have made it easier to compare efficiencies of the highest-energy-use items commonly used in homes. They either show energy-efficiency ratings or estimated annual energy use.

Heating and cooling are the greatest consumers of energy in most homes. All furnaces, heat pumps and central air conditioners will have one of the efficiency ratings discussed below. A higher number indicates higher efficiency. Keep in mind, more efficient models usually cost more initially, so have the contractor do a payback analysis for your home. Just because your neighbor has a particular model, don't just assume it also is the best one for your home.

The HSPF (heating seasonal performance factor) is a heating-efficiency rating that compares the seasonal electricity use of heat pumps. The SEER (seasonal energy efficiency ratio) is a cooling-efficiency rating that compares the seasonal electricity use of heat pumps or central air conditioners.

Heat pumps and central air conditioners are unique appliances in that, as the outdoor temperature changes,

so do their efficiencies. This is because a heat pump, which is basically a central air conditioner running in reverse during the winter, must draw its heat energy from outdoors.

This is easy to do when it is 50 degrees outdoors, so the heat pump operates very efficiently. When the outdoor temperature drops to 10 degrees, the efficiency and heat output of the heat pump drop substantially. There are also inefficiencies when the heat pump starts and stops, and the HSPF and SEER take this into account.

The EER (energy efficiency ratio) is the cooling-efficiency rating that compares the electricity use for window and portable air conditioners. It is a less accurate comparison than SEER because it uses just a steady-state (highest efficiency) operation.

The AFUE (annual fuel utilization efficiency) is the heating-efficiency rating that compares the fuel use of natural gas, propane and oil furnaces.

Heating water is another major energy consumer in most homes. Water-heater efficiency can be compared by its EF (energy factor). Water heaters also have a yellow energy guide label on the tank that lists the estimated annual operating cost. You can also use the yellow energy label to compare refrigerator/freezer and clothes-washer efficiencies.

Visit the Association of Appliance and Equipment Manufacturers' Web site (www.gamanet.org) to find efficiency ratings and output capacities of heating units and electric appliances, including electric water heaters.

The efficiency ratings of heat pumps and air conditioners can be found at the Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Institute site (www.ari.org). There are thousands of models listed by manufacturer in downloadable PDF format.

Energy Star (www.energystar.gov) is another excellent source when selecting energy-efficient home products. Products that meet their high-efficiency standards are listed in many categories. You will also often see the Energy Star label on the most efficient products in appliance dealer showrooms.



Prepared to Weather the Storm?

Every family should have an emergency backup plan. Although NOVEC's service reliability rate is the highest in the area, Mother Nature can cause power outages that even we can't foresee. An emergency generator from NOVEC Solutions can provide your home with back-up power so that you can weather any storm. Prices begin at \$750 and NOVEC Solutions will help you choose the generator for your particular needs. And while you're home safe and warm, we'll be outside getting everyone's service back to normal.

Also available: surge protectors and energy efficient water heaters.

For more information, call 888-335-0500 or email us at novecsolutions@novec.com.

NOVEC Solutions
Technology for everyday life

CollisionPro – A Unique Body Shop

Editor's note: In this column, we will periodically highlight local business success stories. NOVEC does not endorse the services or products of any of the companies, but simply presents the story for your information.



The four partners of CollisionPro, Inc., have built a successful body shop from the ground up. Left to right: Scott Matchett, Won Ahn, Rod Vasquez, Joe DeVarona.

Walking into the CollisionPro, Inc., office in Woodbridge, Va., it hardly seems like you are entering a body shop. The office is pristine with nice décor and a friendly, welcoming staff – not what you typically expect at a body shop. But this is exactly the positive image that the owners of CollisionPro are trying to achieve. “This area is very competitive, there are some good, good body shops,” Rod Vasquez, one of the co-owners, commented, “so we strive to set ourselves apart by focusing on three goals: projecting a positive image, delivering high-quality service and providing excellent customer service.”

Building a business

A work of fate in some ways brought the four partners together to form CollisionPro. In March 1999, Vasquez was a consultant with George Washington University’s Small Business Administration office and three men who worked together in a local body shop each came to him wanting to start their own business. Won Ahn wanted to put his many years of experience and extensive career training in South Korea to use by opening a body shop. Scott Matchett wanted to build on his outstanding reputation as an expert auto painter to open a paint shop. And the third partner, Joe DeVarona, an expert in customer service, was interested in opening a Jiffy Lube franchise. While none of the men knew about the other’s aspirations, Vasquez had the foresight to get these men together, along with himself as the overall business architect, to launch CollisionPro. “Everything was meant to be, I am really a believer [in fate],” Vasquez commented, “and it all worked out very smoothly.” Once the four partners were together, they quickly found a suitable location, Vasquez developed a business plan, and they all began the process of setting up shop.

They built the business from the bottom up, which Vasquez explained was a welcome challenge since you can develop your own goals for how you want to operate the company. They structured the company based on each of their areas of expertise. “We are all interdependent on each other,” Vasquez explained, “I don’t have anything to do with the shop; they are the experts so they handle those areas. I just manage the business end of the company.” Ahn

supervises the body shop and Matchett the paint shop, while DeVarona handles the front office, customer service issues and deals with insurance companies. Vasquez serves as the overall business manager, utilizing the expertise he gained from his commercial engineering studies at Catholic University in his home country of Chile.

Award-winning shop

To recognize their outstanding start as a new business, the Prince William Regional Chamber of Commerce presented CollisionPro with their 2000 New Business of the Year Award. This award is based on success in achieving their mission, customer service delivery, profitability, growth, innovation, ethics and service to the community, all of which CollisionPro excels at.

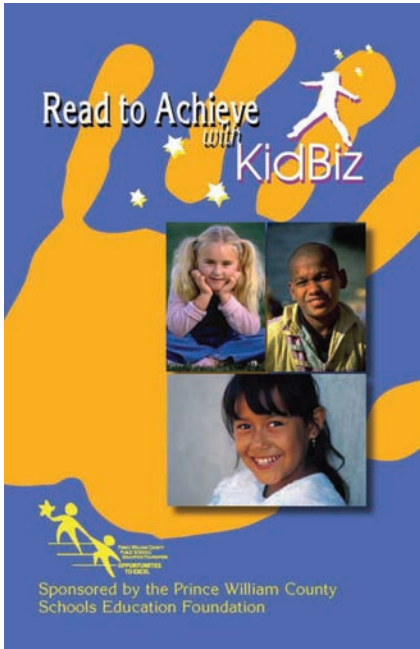
CollisionPro is also involved in the community, through the Chamber of Commerce and other organizations. They recently launched a safety campaign focused on safe driving using the slogan, “Drive Smart – Lose a minute in your life, not your life in a minute.” They are working with Enterprise Rent-a-Car and other companies to spread this message across Prince William County and elsewhere.

Concern for environment

As a PPG Certified collision repair center, CollisionPro offers a lifetime guarantee on paint jobs, backed by the PPG brand, one of the highest-quality auto paints available. In 2000, because of their solid reputation in the industry, CollisionPro was asked by PPG to be the first body shop in North America to test a new water-based paint, Envirobase, which is now widely used across the country. “We had been looking at using a waterborne product in the shop for some time because of the environmental benefits,” Matchett commented, “so we were thrilled to test the new paint.” CollisionPro now uses Envirobase almost exclusively for color paint; the clear top coat however is not yet available in a water-soluble formula.

With their high-quality work, commitment to customer service and outstanding reputation, CollisionPro is sure to continue down their path to success. For more information, visit www.autocollisionpro.com.

Read to Achieve with KidBiz



Students from Porter Traditional School in Woodbridge tackle the day's KidBiz reading assignment at their own pace.

After their success with the EduLink student-teacher-parent communication program in Prince William County Public Schools, the Prince William Education Foundation, Inc., looked for a new project to support.

According to research from leading educational organizations across the nation, third grade is a pivotal year in the growth of positive reading skills for children. Experts agree that children with poor reading skills by the time they reach fourth grade are at a serious disadvantage in ever developing good reading skills.

The Prince William County Public Schools Education Foundation kept that message in mind when reviewing test scores for elementary-age students. In 2003-2004, a staggering 43 percent of students were reading below grade level at the beginning of their fourth-grade year, as demonstrated by Stanford 9 Battery exam results.

It was clear that the school division needed a high-caliber reading program that focused on the all-important third-grade year. A program called KidBiz from Achieve 3000 seemed the perfect fit.

KidBiz is a Web-based reading and writing teaching tool that allows students to progress at their own instructional level. Each student creates a unique KidBiz profile based on age, grade and their individual skill level.

An entire class receives the same reading assignment focusing on current events, but the text is differentiated to each student's personal skill level. The KidBiz instructional level automatically updates as the student's reading and comprehension levels improve.

Donna Snellings, past president of the Education Foundation and public relations liaison at NOVEC, found the program to be intriguing. "KidBiz not only teaches reading skills, but manages to incorporate math and problem

solving into the reading lessons. And today's tech-savvy kids will enjoy the games related to each assignment," Snellings said.

KidBiz gives teachers an additional tool in their reading curriculum and also offers students a chance to do independent work at school and home. The lessons are based on the Virginia Standards of Learning and special-needs options are available, such as audio or Spanish-language support.

Darci Whitehead purchased KidBiz for Porter Traditional School where she serves as principal. "My son has a learning disability, and it was frustrating for him to read these baby words when he could talk up a storm," said Whitehead. "The program motivated him and got him interested in reading and what's going on now. It made sense, and it made connections to him."

The software also keeps track of students' progress in a results database. The school system will review this database as a way to evaluate the success of the program. The Education Foundation has pledged to support KidBiz for the next three years. By that time, enough data will have been collected to determine if KidBiz should become a permanent fixture in Prince William County Schools.

KidBiz was implemented in several elementary schools across the county with plans to reach 25 schools by the end of the 2005-2006 school year. At an average annual cost of \$15 per student, the Education Foundation expects to spend \$231,000 over the initial three years. As a non-profit organization, the Foundation depends on donations and fundraising efforts to support educational programs like KidBiz. For more information about the Foundation, KidBiz or to make a contribution, contact Michele Wickham at (703) 791-8003 or wickhamd@pwcs.edu.



B-24 Liberator Bomber



British Spitfire

Freedom Festival to Host “A Gathering of Eagles”

NOVEC will be one of the local sponsors when The Freedom Museum, an affiliate member of the Smithsonian Institution, hosts “A Gathering of Eagles” during the 7th annual Festival of Freedom. The event is scheduled for October 8 and 9, 2005, at Manassas Regional Airport from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. both days.

Prominent veterans including Medal of Honor recipients, former POWs, Aces, Tuskegee Airmen, members of the Black Sheep Squadron, and other distinguished heroes will attend. They will be available to meet visitors and participate in programs.

The Festival is best known for its vast array of warbirds that will include a B-17 Flying Fortress, B-24 Liberator, British Spitfire, Russian Yak3, and P-51 Mustang. Tim Edwards, who is coordinating the re-enactors, predicts this event will draw the most participation from living history units the Festival has ever had. “Because this is the 60th anniversary of the end of WWII we are featuring WWII aircraft, music and entertainment. The Collings Foundation will be selling rides in the B-17 and B-24,” Edwards commented.

The USO of Metropolitan Washington is co-sponsoring the event and is planning their first-ever hangar dance at Manassas with live swing

music and special guest appearance by Daniel Rodriguez* and the USO Show Troupe, the Liberty Belles.

Opening ceremonies will begin at 11 a.m. Saturday and will include the “Gathering of Eagles.” There will be a fly-by at 2 p.m.

The festival is being supported by the National Capitol Squadron of the Commemorative Air Force that will provide vintage aircraft and staff support. “The CAF is committed to preserving, flying and displaying WWII aircraft in tribute and memory of the men and women who flew them. This gives us a good opportunity to educate younger Americans [as to] the lessons learned during WWII about freedom and air power,” says Squadron Commander Bill Douglas, a retired USAF officer.

“The re-enactors and living history units and military vehicles are critical in telling the story of the fight for freedom. They are a dedicated group and are critical to the success of the festival,” says Army veteran Gene Wells, one of the festival coordinators. “We have more units participating this year than ever before.”

You can find additional information about the festival at www.freedommuseum.org or you can call the Museum at (703) 393-0660.

Donations of \$12 per adult and \$6 for children under 10 are requested (infants free).



**Swing Dance:
Manassas Regional
Airport – OADS
Hangar – Friday,
October 7, 7:30 p.m.
to midnight.
Music by the Tom
Cunningham
Orchestra.
Admission: \$15
pre-registered,
\$20 at the door.**

**Daniel Rodriguez’s rise from New York City police officer to national treasure has been meteoric. His stirring performances of “God Bless America” and the “National Anthem” after September 11, 2001, became transcendent statements of solidarity, determination and hope that galvanized all Americans. Rodriguez will perform at the USO Swing Dance and at opening ceremonies on Saturday at 11 a.m.*





NOVEC is pleased to sponsor the "Timing is Everything" exhibit at The Center For The Arts through October 31. The Gallery is located at 9419 Battle Street in Manassas. Gallery hours are 10-5 weekdays and 1-5 Saturdays.

Save the Date

Saturday, October 15, 2005 – 6:30 p.m.

Monte Carlo Night

Evergreen Country Club, Haymarket, VA

Proceeds to benefit

New Cancer Center in Gainesville for Prince William Hospital & Fauquier Hospital

A fun-filled night of entertainment, food, a silent auction and prizes!

Slot machines, Blackjack, Texas Hold'em Tournaments & much more.

For tickets, sponsorship opportunities or more information, call the PWHS Foundation at (703) 369-8201.



As the top fundraiser for the Prince William County WalkAmerica for the eighth year, J. Manley Garber, NOVEC Board chairman, now has a grant named in his honor. The Garber Grant will help fund the Potomac Hospital Operation Baby Program that provides certified nurse midwives on mobile medical vehicles in the county. Garber is presented with the award by Tina Solomita, March of Dimes community director.



Chairman:
J. Manley Garber

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Woodbridge/Dale City/Montclair



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Loudoun County, South of Rt. 7



Secretary:
Wade C. House

District 5
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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
District 4

Manassas/Gainesville



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