

TAKING TIME TO THANK ALL OF AMERICA'S LINEWORKERS



After a hurricane, a flood, a fire, or any other disaster, first responders are the men and women who go into harm's way. They are in the thick of it, courageously facing the elements. Lineworkers are NOVEC's first responders, and every April, we join all Americans in honoring lineworkers for bravery and determination to rebuild what has been destroyed, and to help restore the electricity that is essential to much of our daily lives.

Lineworkers, like first responders, are among the initial witnesses to the damage Mother Nature can cause. There is a camaraderie among lineworkers, and cooperatives have a proud history of sending their crews to help lineworkers in other communities when the need arises.

Their jobs, however, are equally as important on days when the call to action is not quite so dramatic. At NOVEC, our lineworkers are in your neighborhoods every day strengthening the Co-op's infrastructure and proactively enhancing the reliability of your electric service. I've seen NOVEC's crews in action, and it's clear why becoming a lineworker takes years of training and a special sense of dedication.

Many lineworkers, both at NOVEC and throughout America, will tell you what they do is so much more than a job. It's a calling that demands physical strength, ingenuity, professionalism, intelligence, and a never-ending commitment to safety. Working around electricity is dangerous, and lineworkers take every precaution to protect themselves, the people they work side by side with, and the customers they serve.

What lineworkers do for a living makes it possible for all of us to do what WE do for a living. If you see a NOVEC lineworker this month, or any time of year, please consider saying "thank you." And on behalf of everyone at NOVEC, I'd like to thank lineworkers across the country.

We appreciate you, and we're proud of you. Stay safe out there.

Best Regards,

Dave Schleicher

NOVEC'S MISSION

Improve the quality of life for members, employees, and communities by providing safe and reliable electricity at competitive prices.



P.O. Box 2710, Manassas, VA 20108
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For updates, tips on safety, energy savings ideas, and career information, find us on social media or go to novec.com.

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ENERGY TIP OF THE MONTH

Using less hot water saves energy dollars. Washing a full load of dishes in a dishwasher uses about 5 or 6 gallons of hot water, while washing by hand can use 20 to 30 gallons. You can save even more by scraping food off dishes instead of rinsing, and by turning off the heated dry cycle and letting dishes air dry in the dishwasher.



Driver Education

Your car makes contact with a downed power line ... what would you do?

By Robin Earl

A driver's first instinct after hitting a utility pole may be to get out of the car to assess the damage, or perhaps to get help. Instead, call for assistance on your phone and stay in the car until a first responder or lineworker informs you the power line has been deenergized.

You are safe inside the vehicle, but if the line is energized, the electricity can travel through the metal of the vehicle around you. If you try to exit the vehicle and touch the car and ground at the same time, the electricity will travel from the car to the ground through **you**, causing death or serious injury.

If you are not completely sure the utility lines are deenergized, stay put.

Power lines may arc and spark with electricity even when there are no visible signs that they are live, but they are just as lethal.

And remember, the electricity is not only traveling through the metal of the vehicle; it is also traveling in the ground around the downed line. Think of the immediate area as a body of water. If you drop a stone into the water, it creates ripples from the center outward. When there is a downed power line, bands of electric power ripple out from the center, decreasing in intensity as they get farther away. Anywhere within 35 feet of the touch point could be energized.

- ⚡ Call 911 to notify emergency personnel and utility services.
- ⚡ People and pets should stay at least 35 feet away from a downed power line until it is confirmed that the line has been deenergized.
- ⚡ Do not approach the accident scene. If you see someone approaching, warn them to stay back.

STEP POTENTIAL

WHAT IS STEP POTENTIAL?
IT IS VOLTAGE BETWEEN THE SPAN OF ONE STEP.

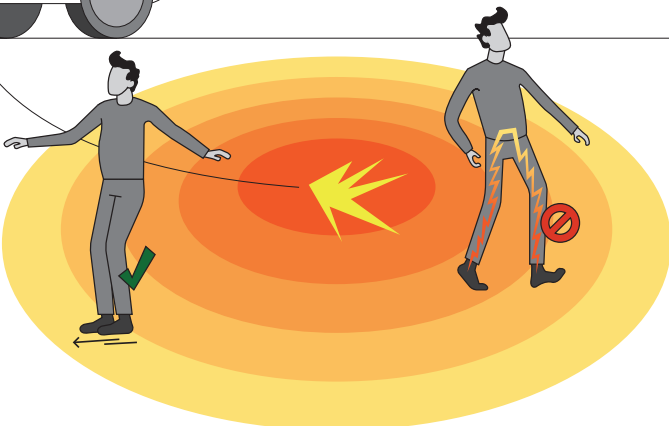
VOLTAGE IS HIGHEST AT THE SOURCE AND FADES AS THE ENERGY MOVES ACROSS THE GROUND.

STANDING ON TWO DIFFERENT VOLTAGE LEVELS INCREASES YOUR RISK OF ELECTROCUTION.

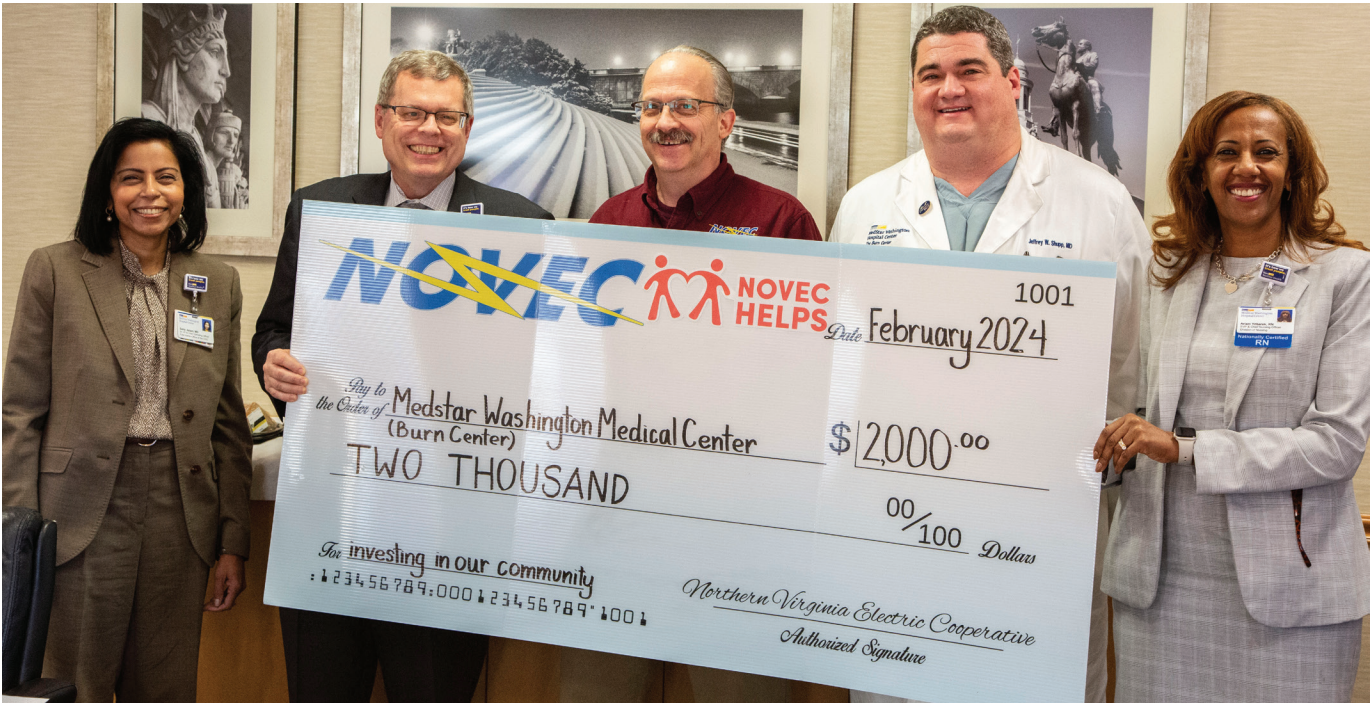
How to safely leave the car (but only if you must)

What if there is a fire or other emergency, so you absolutely must leave the car despite the possibility of a live downed power line? In that case, open the door as wide as possible and — keeping both feet together — jump a short distance so you are no longer making contact with the vehicle. As you land, keep your feet together and don't touch anything with your hands.

Immediately shuffle slowly and carefully away from the car, keeping your feet as close together as you can. Keep going until you are more than 35 feet from the downed power line.



Joint Donation Supports MedStar Washington Hospital Burn Center



By Robin Earl

In recognition of Burn Awareness Week in February, NOVEC and NOVEC HELPS (Hands Engaged in Local Public Service) teamed up to donate \$2,000 to MedStar Washington Hospital Center's Burn Center. NOVEC HELPS is the Cooperative's employee-managed not-for-profit independent 501(c)(3) organization.

MedStar is the only adult burn treatment center in the Washington Metropolitan area, serving the District of Columbia, southern Maryland, Northern Virginia, and eastern West Virginia.

The NOVEC/NOVEC HELPS contributions of \$1,000 apiece will go toward construction currently underway at the MedStar Burn Center, which includes renovations in the hospital's Burn Intensive Care Unit.

"We hope that our employees will never have to use the burn center, but if any of our lineworkers were hurt in an electrical accident, this is where they would go for help."

SHAWN DAVIS, NOVEC'S MANAGER OF RISK MANAGEMENT, SAFETY AND SECURITY

Pictured from left, Saira Aslam, MedStar senior vice president and chief operating officer; Dr. Gregory Argyros, MedStar president; Shawn Davis, NOVEC manager of risk management, safety, and security; Dr. Jeffrey Shupp, chief of burn surgery and medical director of MedStar's Burn Center; and Ariam Yitbarek, RN, MedStar's chief nursing officer.



Dr. Jeffrey Shupp, chief of burn surgery and medical director of MedStar's Burn Center, gives a tour inside the Burn Intensive Care Unit's Rehabilitation Gym. Photos by Robin Earl.

'I live for the game and these kids'

NOVEC GIS Supervisor Helps High School Athletes Map Out a Positive Future

By Robin Earl

In the opening minutes of a January boys basketball game between Osbourn Park and Unity Reed high schools in Manassas, Unity head coach Jeremy Barnes sat next to his assistant coach and quietly watched the game.

It didn't last long.

Before the first period was over, he was on his feet, pacing and shouting encouragement to his team. Timeouts were intense. Barnes looked each player in the eye as he coaxed the best out of them. They shared high-fives as the buzzer sounded and the boys ran back on the court. Unity Reed won 60-55.

Barnes described the 2023-'24 season as a "rebuilding year," adding, "The team is very young, a lot of sophomores. At 14 or 15, you are not the best you can be yet. They are learning.

"The head coach job is way different," said Barnes, who was an assistant coach for 17 years before taking over as the Lions head coach last year. "I have to work with the school administration, parents, and teachers. Everything runs through me."

Barnes cares — a lot — about his players. He channels a lifetime of basketball knowledge and dad wisdom to help them perform on the court and in life. He manages all that while raising three children with his wife, and working as the Geographic Information System (GIS) Supervisor at NOVEC's Technical Center in Gainesville.

Barnes' six-person GIS team maintains the maps that display where power lines stretch across the Co-op's service territory. "We keep track of our power lines, parcels, facilities, transformers, all of it," he explained.

Barnes has been with NOVEC for 19 years, and has managed his professional duties along with his coaching responsibilities. During the season, his squad practices every weeknight they don't have a game. The 22-game regular season stretches from November to February.

Some of Barnes' NOVEC co-workers and the leadership team support his coaching. "They show up to games!" he said. It means a lot to the coach.



Unity Reed High School basketball coach Jeremy Barnes guides his team during a game against Osbourn Park High School.

JEREMY BARNES' MANTRA FOR HIS TEAM

Communication **O**utwork **M**entality **P**assion **E**ffort **T**ogetherness **E**nthusiasm



Jeremy Barnes, NOVEC GIS Supervisor and Unity Reed High School Coach.

"Since the pandemic, sports participation has been way down," he said. "Fewer kids try out and students don't come to the games. Friendly rivalries between schools are nonexistent." He'd like to see the stands full again, and have a deeper bench to build on.

Building the future

Despite almost two decades as a coach, Barnes is still learning. "You have to adapt to each player. Some need tough love, some you have to coddle a little. Some of these boys are the man of the house and they are not used to being reprimanded. With all of them, you lead with love."

The most important quality Barnes brings to the table, he said, is honesty. "I tell them what's true. If a player wants to be a point guard but isn't a talented dribbler, I ask them to concentrate on being a good defender, to be the best defender they can be."

Coaching is more than teaching how to play a tight man-to-man defense or shoot a 3-pointer. "When they are dealing with personal issues, I try to be that ear for them, too. I think they appreciate the realness.

I'm candid. Some boys start off in a hole. I don't sugarcoat it ... I want to be part of these kids' village," he said.

Barnes also wants to help his students build a future. He and a friend run Program Changers, a nonprofit focused on helping athletes get into college and secure scholarships. The two-person organization acts as a liaison between college recruiters and students who play football, or girls or boys basketball. Barnes estimates that they have been instrumental in assisting 30 or 40 student athletes so far.

He has also helped his athletes find jobs and has written letters of support when someone gets into trouble. He's purchased shoes and paid for haircuts. "You can't save everyone," he said, but he tries.

Barnes, 44, played basketball in high school and college; he was named to the all-district, all-city, and all-county

basketball teams his senior year at Stonewall Jackson High School (before it was renamed Unity Reed). "I was good. I wasn't a bum. I was a scoring machine on the court," he laughed. "I still think I can play. I'm still competitive in my brain.

"I love it. That's why I do it. I live for the game, and these kids. It doesn't matter to me if we win or lose. It's however the ball bounces."



Coach Jeremy Barnes gives a high-five to a team member before tipoff.



Kristin Kesecker of Blue Ridge Cyclery shows off one popular e-bike.



EARTH DAY

APRIL 22ND

Give your car a break and try out some two-wheeled transportation. If you need a little extra oomph, electric bikes might be a good option.

A Quick Primer on Electric Bikes

By Robin Earl

For most questions about electric bikes, the answer is “it depends.” E-bike models differ widely, and so do the ways riders use them.

Someone out for a leisurely ride on level ground might not need to use the motorized “assist” feature very much, for instance. This less-intensive use requires less energy — from the rider and from the bike’s motor. Another person commuting through a hilly area to work might have the assist mode cranked up to the highest setting. This type of riding would deplete the battery more quickly. The miles before a recharge vary, too, anywhere from 15 to 40 or so miles between charges.

Which e-bike is right for you?

It depends. First, there are no free rides on an e-bike. If you want to move, you have to pedal. How much the e-bike will “assist” you depends on what mode you choose. Level 1 provides 50% more of whatever power the rider is giving. Other levels offer more of an assist — up to a turbo-charged 300%. That means the e-bike is providing the equivalent of 300% of the power your legs are giving. That can make a difference if you are debating riding up a steep hill or finding a less-challenging route.

Some e-bikes can reach speeds of 20 miles per hour, with maximum assist activated. Others can push that to 28 mph.

E-bike batteries and motors vary as well. Some motors are located near the pedals, at the center of the bike; others are at the back wheel. Kristin Kesecker, marketing manager of Blue Ridge Cyclery in Warrenton, explained that the first type of motor feels very natural, like you are riding with just a little more “oomph” in your legs. The rear-wheel motor version can feel a little like “you are being pushed,” she said. Both types of power supply make some noise when they are activated; coasting is mostly quiet.

Some batteries can be removed for charging; others require the bike itself to be plugged into an electric wall outlet. Charging can take anywhere from four to six hours for a 250-watt battery, or up to eight hours for a higher-wattage model.

Kesecker said that e-bikes are growing in popularity with people of all ages. Some people use them for adaptive purposes. Maybe they’ve had a knee replacement or other injury and they need a little help on challenging terrain. Others use them to keep up with their family or friends who ride. Then of course, Kesecker pointed out, there’s a less-practical reason — “they’re fun!”

YOU HAVE THE POWER TO SAVE

Take charge of your spring energy bills with these simple actions:

- ✓ Adjust ceiling fans to rotate counterclockwise.
- ✓ Install a programmable thermostat.
- ✓ Schedule a professional technician to service your HVAC system.
- ✓ Set your water heater to 120 degrees.

Saving energy means saving money. Harness your savings power today!

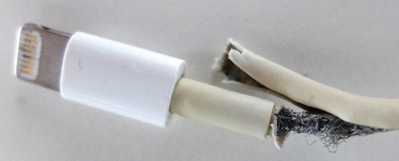
Find more tips and tools at novec.com/save.



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SAFETY CHECK



Safety Starts with You

Awareness and education about potential electrical dangers can help prevent fires or electric shock.

- Replace cords and charging cables that feel warm to the touch.
- Inspect electrical appliances and power tools for damaged cords or broken plugs.
- Remove a plug using the casing of the plug — not by the cord.



REMEMBER: In wet or damp locations (such as bathrooms) have a qualified electrician install ground fault circuit interrupter outlets to prevent shock or electrocution.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY TRIVIA

Smoke alarms should be tested ____.

A. Every month B. Every other month C. Every six months D. Every year

Answer: A

WRITE ON

Youth Writing Contest

Students, crank up your imagination along with your keyboard!

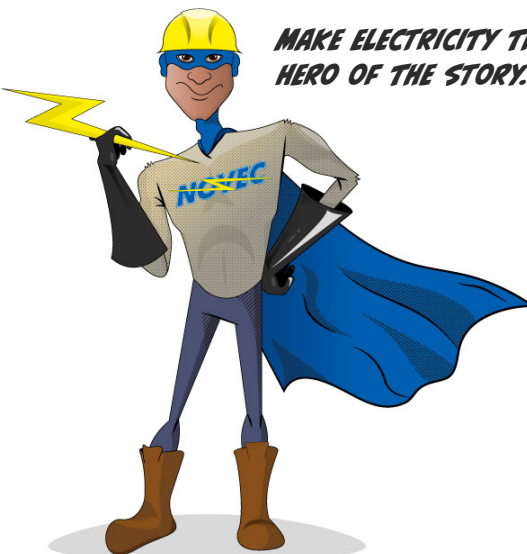
NOVEC is sponsoring a creative writing contest for children aged 5 to 16 who have a parent or guardian living in a home that receives electricity from the Cooperative.

Children can submit an original, fictional story of no more than 500 words where electricity is the “hero” of the story. The deadline is 5 p.m. on Wednesday, May 15; there is a limit of one submission per person.

Prizes will be awarded to the best story by a student:

- 5-9 years old
- 10-13 years old
- 14-16 years old

Portions of the winning stories will be featured in an issue of *Cooperative Living*. With entries, please include: the authors name, age, hometown, school, grade in school, and a sentence about how the child feels about writing stories.



MAKE ELECTRICITY THE HERO OF THE STORY.

MAIL ENTRIES TO: Writing Contest, NOVEC Public Relations, P.O. Box 2710, Manassas, VA 20108, or email communications@novec.com.

SUBMISSIONS DUE: 5 p.m., Wednesday, May 15, 2024

NOVEC Youth Tour Students Visit State Capitol

By Jenny Shaskan

In June 2023, NOVEC sponsored four local high school students for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Youth Tour in Washington. These students — along with nearly 1,800 other boys and girls from across the nation — spent a week learning about cooperatives, visiting historic sites and museums, and seeing the federal government in action.

On Feb. 15, 2024, the Co-op invited those four students to the second phase of NOVEC's program, a visit to the Virginia General Assembly in Richmond. Two of them — Grace Kestler of Loudoun Valley High School in Leesburg and Alexa Zarkauskas of C.D. Hylton High School in Woodbridge — met with state representatives from NOVEC's service territory. Taking advantage of their time with Del. Fernando "Marty" Martinez (Loudoun County) and Del. Josh Thomas (Prince William County), the students discussed education reform, the economy, and the current fentanyl crisis.

"I enjoyed meeting with my state representative to try and make a difference in my local and state communities," Zarkauskas said.

During the visit, students also took a tour of the Virginia State Capitol and attended General Assembly sessions, where they were introduced from the floor of the House of Delegates.



NOVEC Youth Tour students Grace Kestler and Alexa Zarkauskas visited the Virginia General Assembly on Feb. 15. Pictured are, from left, Kestler, Zarkauskas, NOVEC Rates and Regulatory Manager Howard Spinner, and Del. Fernando "Marty" Martinez. Martinez represents the 29th District, serving part of Loudoun County.

"The trip to Richmond helped me learn about our state government. It was inspirational to see it all work in action," said Kestler. "I am so grateful for the opportunities Youth Tour has given me and the knowledge I have learned from the NOVEC employees."

The application process for Youth Tour 2024 closed in February. Up to four students will represent NOVEC at this summer's week-long Youth Tour event in the nation's capital.

RECYCLE, REDUCE, REUSE

By Robin Earl

With an eye toward keeping waste out of our local landfills, NOVEC has developed a robust recycling program. As part of that effort, the Co-op recycles the small, medium, and large wooden spools that are used to store wire and cable. Since 1996, the Co-op has avoided sending thousands of pounds of waste to landfills by recycling or giving away the empty spools. In addition, NOVEC avoids paying disposal costs and passes those savings on to our customers.

To obtain one or more spools free of charge, call NOVEC's Gainesville warehouse at 703-754-6739, between 8 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, to check on availability. Spools may be picked up at NOVEC's Gainesville warehouse at 5399 Wellington Branch Dr., where NOVEC's materials management staff will use a forklift to load the reels into your vehicle.



Free wire spools may be picked up at NOVEC's warehouse in Gainesville.