

EXPANDING OPTIONS FOR CUSTOMERS WHO CHOOSE TO PLUG IN INSTEAD OF GAS UP



If you own an electric vehicle (EV) or are considering getting one ... NOVEC has a great deal for you!

EVs represent only about 2% of registered vehicles in Virginia, but almost 10% of new vehicles sold. When you think of the lifestyle and demographics of Northern Virginia residents, you think of people who commute on a regular basis and have EV charging stations available along the way. EV charging stations are popping up all the time at apartments, airports, shopping centers and even “gas” stations to make recharging your vehicle simple and convenient. NOVEC is also offering convenient choices to fit your changing lives.

As you will read in more detail on page 20 of this month's magazine, NOVEC began offering a voluntary electric rate – EV-1 – in 2023 to customers who own or lease an EV. The Co-op developed EV-1 to help customers save money if they charge their EVs at home overnight. So far, EV-1 has been very successful with more than 1,500 customers signed up.

In addition to the EV-1 rate, NOVEC is looking to the future to ensure our infrastructure is prepared to handle an increase in EVs, which are becoming more popular each year. It's NOVEC's responsibility to meet the higher demand for electricity created as more Co-op customers want the convenience of charging their cars at home (A Level-2 charger is the equivalent of running two or three electric dryers at the same time). Homeowners also need to make sure their electric service equipment is capable of safely adding a charger by consulting a qualified electrician.

One more thing ... the month of May is a time of pride and joy for many families as they see the next generation graduating from high school and college. On behalf of NOVEC, I'd like to say congratulations to all graduates and wish you well as you explore what the future holds. Congratulations to graduates and their parents!

Best Regards,

Dave Schleicher

CALL FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS NOMINATIONS

NOVEC is now accepting nominations for candidates to represent Districts 4 and 5 on the NOVEC Board of Directors. Any NOVEC member in good standing who lives in either district may run for a four-year term for that district's board seat.

See the district map at novec.com/bod.

For more information about the nomination process, visit novec.com/annualmeeting. To obtain a nomination petition, email annualmeetingLK@novec.com.



P.O. Box 2710, Manassas, VA 20108
novec.com | 703-335-0500

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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

Many water heater manufacturers set thermostats at 140 degrees, but when you dial it down to 120 degrees, you can save money. Adjusting a water heater's temperature is a quick and easy way to save energy; check the owner's manual for instructions to adjust it. If you have any questions, consult a professional technician.



Spring Cleaning Can Also Boost Energy Efficiency

By Robin Earl

As temperatures rise and the leaves return to the trees, you may get the urge to freshen up and reorganize your home. It's also a good time to refresh your energy efficiency with some simple chores and changes.



ENERGY SAVING TIP



Caulking around windows and doors helps maintain a comfortable temperature inside your home by sealing air leaks.

ENERGY SAVING TIP



Setting the dial on your washing machine to cold water saves energy on every load by reducing the amount of hot water that is used.

For more tips, visit energystar.gov/saveathome or novec.com/save.



SPRING SAVING ENERGY CHECKLIST

☒ When you move the couch to clean underneath, check all the cords plugged in back there. Are they frayed or warm to the touch? If so, those cables may be inefficient or might even be a fire hazard. Replace any visibly damaged cords immediately.

☒ Dust can gradually dim the light of LED lightbulbs unless you clean them regularly. The best way to remove dust and dirt is to wipe thoroughly and gently with a dry cloth. (A damp cloth can damage the bulb.)

☒ In the kitchen, check the refrigerator to make sure it's running at the optimal temperature; 37 degrees is the sweet spot. The freezer should be at 0 degrees.

☒ Warmer temperatures mean you won't be using the fireplace. When you are cleaning it one last time this spring, close the fireplace flue damper and glass doors. If it's powered by gas, turn off the gas flow.

NOVEC's Biomass Facility Helps Farmers in 2 Ways

By Robin Earl

The NOVEC Halifax County Biomass Electric Generating Facility in South Boston, Virginia helps agriculture at both ends of the production process, according to the Virginia Farm Bureau, the state's largest farm advocacy group. On the front end, NOVEC's plant provides landowners with a reliable market for wood scraps. Once land has been harvested for timber, it can be cleared and prepped for replanting. And after wood processing is complete, nutrient-rich byproducts are utilized by farmers to enrich their fields.

The Cooperative does not cut down trees or buy timber tracts to generate power; it relies on branches, treetops, and other brush left behind by commercial loggers to fuel the biomass plant. Using this wood debris is a cleaner, more environmentally friendly alternative to open burning or leaving it to decay. And it clears the way for new seedlings.

Biomass power production is dependable, economical, and environmentally friendly. This is especially true in Virginia's Southside region — where the Halifax plant is located. Known as the state's "wood-basket region," acres of forests and commercial logging create abundant wood waste.

About 65 tons of raw materials move through the plant every hour, said Mike Davis, Halifax County biomass fuel procurement and plant operations manager. "We successfully run the facility under one of the tightest emissions permitting requirements in the country."

After the energy generation process is complete, NOVEC distributes the final collected matter — also known as wood ash — to local farmers as a liming agent, said Gil Jaramillo, vice president of NOVEC's power supply division.



Jonathan Hudson, a farmer of 1,600 acres, utilizes the wood ash produced by NOVEC's Biomass Facility to fertilize his crops.

Jonathan Hudson runs Hudson Farms Enterprises in Turbeville with his brother, Steve. They grow "a little bit of everything — soybeans, tobacco, wheat, field corn, tomatoes, sweet corn, cantaloupes, and watermelons." Jonathan Hudson confirmed in a 2022 interview that he has been applying wood ash from the biomass plant to his cropland with great success. He said, "It's greatly improving the fertility and pH of a lot of fields in Halifax County." He pointed to a field on his farm and said, "This field last year ... wouldn't grow hardly any beans, any wheat. I put 4 tons of wood ash on it and worked it in. And last year, I got 90 bushels of beans ... the wheat has looked better this year than it has looked in years."

In a 2023 interview with the Virginia Farm Bureau, Hudson said, "You can turn bad land around quick. Land that maybe somebody's been neglecting, hasn't been

paying attention to pH, hasn't been paying attention to fertilizer analysis. You can really turn it around quick and get it back into productivity."

Hudson said in March that the plant is continuing to help landowners in the area. "I love it. It has provided benefits for the forestry industry, as well as for farmers."



The Biomass Facility, which celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2023, is managed by NOVEC Energy Production, a NOVEC subsidiary. The plant produces 49.9-megawatts of renewable energy, enough to power 16,000 NOVEC homes.



UNDERSTANDING ADVANCED METERS

Newest Technology Provides Better Data to Manage Energy Needs

By Robin Earl

Thirty years ago, electric meter readers had to read the dials once a month by physically going to each home and business. Whirring dials on electric meters are now a thing of the past. “We’ve had automated readings since 1995,” said Clare Bargerstock, NOVEC’s system metering manager.

The latest technology — advanced metering — is designed for a more complicated power grid. And residents can use the detailed information the meters provide to tweak their energy use and save money.

Co-op customers with solar panels and those who participate in NOVEC’s electric vehicle rate program (EV-1) rely on the new meters for important data on energy expenditure and information relating to on- or off-peak energy use.

EV-1 customers can monitor how much energy it takes to charge their vehicles, and see how much money they save by powering up during off-peak hours. Solar customers can note how much excess energy from the panels has been sent back to NOVEC, and how many kilowatt hours (kWhs) their homes have used each month. “The old meters can’t do that,” said Bargerstock.

Customers can monitor energy-use data through their SmartHub app to better manage their power requirements.

Another big plus: On those rare occasions when the power goes out, the advanced meter reports the outage to NOVEC automatically so it can be addressed as quickly as possible. Thirty towers facilitate communications on a private network throughout NOVEC’s system.

Power can be turned on or off by flipping a switch. This reliable network allows NOVEC to avoid physically driving out to homes, saving time and money for the Cooperative, and therefore, for its customers.

About 35,000 advanced meters have been installed so far, and Bargerstock estimates it will take another five years to switch over all of NOVEC’s 180,000 customers. He said, “Supply chain issues have eased significantly, but it will take a while yet to get everyone the upgraded meters.”

Field technicians install the newer meters when it’s required — for EV-1 rate or solar power participants, or when they have to visit a home for another reason. “About 60% of the meters will be replaced that way, then we will fill in with the rest,” Bargerstock said.

NOVEC’s field service technicians knock on the door prior to exchanging the meter. Replacement is quick and easy. However, it does require a brief interruption of power that lasts a few minutes.



NOVEC Field Services Technician Candace Burns installs an advanced meter at an apartment building in Manassas.

Teaching the Next Generation of Metering Experts

By Robin Earl

Clare Bargerstock, NOVEC’s system metering manager, has been immersed in the details and data of electric metering for more than three-and-a-half decades. For many years, the metering veteran helped to coordinate the North Carolina Electric

Meter School and Conference, and he still teaches at the annual five-day conference every June. He has taught a wide range of classes, including “Overview of a Utility System from the Generator to the Customer,” “Meter Safety,” and “Metering of Renewable Energy.”

contact with field technicians, who install meters or address problems. Bargerstock said most of these NOVEC metering experts have been on the job for more than 15 years, and stay abreast of the constant changes in technology through refresher training at the North Carolina metering school. New Field Service employees attend the conference each of their first three years at NOVEC and then rotate in for continued education.

One of only a few in the country, the school offers education for every level of meter personnel, covering new technologies, problems, resources, and solutions to meet the ever-changing environment of the industry. “There are four metering tracts, two substation tracts and an emerging technology tract,” said Bargerstock. “There’s a lot of learning to be done.”

The school, managed by North Carolina State University, has been training metering professionals since 1923.

Of all the employees in any electric provider’s metering department, customers are most likely to come in



Clare Bargerstock is NOVEC’s system metering manager.

KEEP THE METER CLEAR

As you consider spring updates to your outdoor spaces, make sure that your new deck addition or shed doesn’t block the electric meter. The Co-op must have access to its meters at all times, so plan home improvements accordingly.



An all-electric SUV at a NOVEC customer's farm in Nokesville.

NOVEC's EV-1 Rate is Helping Electric Vehicle Drivers Save Money

By Robin Earl

Northern Virginia drivers are joining the growing number of people nationwide who are embracing electric vehicles (EVs). The number of registered EVs in the region has increased nearly six-fold, from 7,200 at the end of 2017 to more than 41,000 by December 2022. And, of the 66,000 EVs in the state, nearly two-thirds are registered in Northern Virginia.

The Co-op began offering a special rate to EV owners in January 2023. The EV-1 rate is a voluntary residential electric rate created by NOVEC specifically for customers with at least one EV. More than 1,500 members are currently taking advantage of the new rate, which incentivizes them to charge their EVs at home during off-peak hours (between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m.). Members on the EV-1 rate save an estimated 50% on all electric use in their homes during that seven-hour window.

Early EV-1 data shows most NOVEC members charge their EVs between 11 p.m. and 2 a.m.

Since an EV battery is so large, it requires a substantial amount of electricity; charging at the lower off-peak rate can offer significant savings. The on-peak EV-1 rate is slightly higher than the standard residential rate, so the Co-op encourages members to review the comprehensive information on the NOVEC website to see if it's a good fit for you and your electricity use habits.

For more information, including frequently asked questions about the EV-1 rate, check out the EV section of NOVEC's website (novec.com/ev), or call NOVEC's Customer Care Center at 703-335-0500.

BENEFITS OF ELECTRIC VEHICLES

- ✓ Less maintenance
- ✓ Environmentally-friendly
- ✓ Instant torque

#DriveElectric

+ **FOR MORE INFO:** Are you trying to decide if an electric vehicle is right for you? NOVEC can help. Visit novec.com/ev for resources to help you get started.

HOW DO I ENROLL IN THE EV-1 RATE PROGRAM?

Electric vehicle drivers can sign up through the SmartHub app or send an email to businessdev@novec.com and provide the following:

- Name
- NOVEC account number
- Address
- Phone number
- A written statement in the body of the email stating that you own or lease at least one electric vehicle, and that you would like to enroll in the EV-1 rate program.

Source: Consumer Reports

Making the Switch to ELECTRIC LAWN EQUIPMENT

Considering electric equipment to maintain your outdoor space? Check out the benefits of electric and considerations before making the switch.

Benefits of Electric Equipment

- Battery-powered equipment produces zero emissions
- No hassle and mess from gasoline and oil
- Quieter and more reliable than gas-powered equipment
- Some electric mowers can cut more than an acre of grass on a single charge

Considerations Before Going Electric

- Purchasing from a single brand can streamline charging
- Consider the size of your property and battery run time
- Backup batteries may be needed for larger properties
- Electric equipment is pricier up front

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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Girls Soccer Team Competed in Alabama Tourney with Assist from NOVEC HELPS



By Robin Earl

NOVEC HELPS (Hands Engaged in Local Public Service) donated \$500 to Battlefield High School's girls soccer team to compete in the Southern Coast Cup from March 21-23. The contribution helped 25 girls make the trek to Foley, Alabama, where the 50-team competition took place.

Coach Kevin Hilton said that his Haymarket squad, which competed at the state level in 2023, was the only Virginia team to participate in the Southern Coast Cup, and finished with one win, one loss and one tie. "The girls had a great trip and faced some very challenging competition," he said.

NOVEC HELPS is an employee-run, 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Learn more at novechelps.org or at facebook.com/novechelps.



Battlefield High School girls soccer players Kylie Terhaar (goalkeeper, left), Zoey Kerns (center) and Bella Trainer (right) practice before their March tournament.

LAST CHANCE

Youth Writing Contest

Students, crank up your imagination along with your keyboard!

NOVEC is sponsoring a creative writing contest for children ages 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.



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