NOVELLUS NAMES DR. SASSON SOMEKH AS PRESIDENT

SAN JOSE, Calif., Jan. 26, 2004--Novellus Systems, Inc. (Nasdaq NM: NVLS), the productivity and innovation leader in advanced deposition, surface preparation and chemical mechanical planarization processes for the global semiconductor industry, today announced the appointment of Dr. Sasson (Sass) Somekh (57) as President. Dr. Somekh will join Richard S. Hill and Tom St. Dennis in Novellus' Office of the CEO. As President, Somekh will assume the primary role in driving new product development and the product line business units.

Dr. Somekh has enjoyed a distinguished career in the semiconductor capital equipment business, transitioning from engineering and technology roles into executive management. Early in his career, he played a pivotal role in the development of products for the semiconductor industry that have changed the course of semiconductor manufacturing. Throughout that time, he has received industry recognition through numerous distinctive awards.

In 1988, Dr. Somekh received the SEMI Award from the Semiconductor Equipment and Materials Institute (SEMI) for his work in establishing plasma etch as a production technology in semiconductor processing. In 1993, he was recognized as a co-inventor of the Precision 5000 when it became the first semiconductor manufacturing system to be placed in the permanent collection of the Smithsonian Institution. It is on display in the Information Age exhibit at the National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C. In 1994, Dr. Somekh received the SEMI's Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of his many contributions to the industry.

Dr. Somekh spent 23 years at Applied Materials, most recently as Executive Vice President. He is widely respected for his accomplishments, which were critical to Applied Materials' success. Prior to joining Applied, he worked at Bell Laboratories and Intel Corporation. Dr. Somekh received his doctorate in electrical engineering from the California Institute of Technology. He holds more than 50 U.S. patents.

Commenting on Dr. Somekh's appointment, Novellus' chairman and chief executive officer, Richard S. Hill, stated, "I have strong admiration and respect for Sass, and I am delighted that he has chosen to join Novellus. He has the knowledge, skills and ability to lead Novellus to the next level. His strong drive and vision have always been recognized by Novellus, and we feel that he will complement the already strong and driven Novellus management team."

About Novellus:

Novellus Systems, Inc., an S&P 500 company, manufactures, markets and services advanced deposition, surface preparation and chemical mechanical planarization equipment for today's advanced integrated circuits. Our products are designed for high-volume production of advanced, leading-edge semiconductor devices at the lowest possible cost. Headquartered in San Jose, Calif., with subsidiaries throughout the United States, as well as in the United Kingdom, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Ireland, Israel, India, China, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan, we are a publicly traded company on the Nasdaq stock exchange (Nasdaq: NVLS) and a component of the Nasdaq-100 Index . Additional information about Novellus is available on our home page at www.novellus.com

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