FORMER NOVELLUS BOARD MEMBER AND ADVISOR PASSES AWAY

SAN JOSE, Calif., May 21, 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 passing of former board member, Joseph (Joe) Van Poppelen. A valued contributor to the Novellus team, Van Poppelen (76) served as a member of the company's board of directors from 1993 to 1998. He continued to serve Novellus in an advisory capacity up until recently.

"I am personally saddened by Joe's passing," said Novellus' chairman and chief executive officer, Richard S. Hill. "He will be missed by all of us at Novellus and all who knew him. We extend our condolences to his family."

A veteran of Silicon Valley's electronics industry, Van Poppelen held senior management positions throughout his lengthy career at a variety of companies, including, National Semiconductor Corp., ITT and Fairchild.

A memorial service for Van Poppelen will be held today at 3:00 p.m. at the Church of the Nativity in Menlo Park, Calif.

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, Italy, 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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