Prominently situated next to ARVO Central at the entrance to the Exhibit Hall, NAEVR Central, which serves as the vision research community’s “Town Hall,” drew its largest number of visitors ever at the 2010 ARVO Annual Meeting. In addition to contacting Congress to urge increased FY2011 NIH/NEI funding, researchers could also visit with representatives of the Department of Defense’s (DOD) Telemedicine and Advanced Technology Research Center (TATRC) and the joint DOD/Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Vision Center of Excellence (VCE).

“There was a palpable energy at NAEVR Central this year, much of which I attribute to the unprecedented $230 million increase in FY2009 vision research funding, driven primary by the $175 million in NEI ARRA funding, as well as FY2009 and 2010 increases in “regular” NEI appropriations,” said NAEVR’s James Jorkasky, who added that many researchers dropped by to describe to him their ARRA-funded research.

“Of course, the presence of the TATRC representatives for three days at NAEVR Central attracted many additional researchers who had heard about funding opportunities—not only at TATRC, but at other “sister” agencies within the DOD—that relate to traumatic injury to the eye and other sensory organs. NAEVR Advocacy Manager David Epstein and I answered dozens of questions about these opportunities and alerted researchers to an FY2010 Program Announcement expected shortly from the FY2010 Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) program.”

NAEVR Seeks FY2011 PRMR-Vision Funding at $10 Million
With TATRC’s recent announcement of its awards, NAEVR has tangible examples of vision research to share with its Capitol Hill champions. NAEVR has been working closely with Blinded Veterans Association (BVA) to secure House and Senate “Dear Colleague” letters from non-defense appropriators in support of FY2011 PRMR-Vision funding at $10 million.