



Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station NRC UPDATE

July 2004

FirstEnergy to begin Independent Assessments in August

The Confirmatory Order, issued by the NRC to FirstEnergy as part of its authorization to resume operations at Davis-Besse, requires the utility to conduct independent assessments of four key areas at the plant: operations performance, corrective action program, engineering program effectiveness, and organizational safety culture, including a safety conscious work environment.

Davis-Besse's self assessments did not identify the reactor pressure reactor head corrosion or the degrading safety focus at the plant prior to the March 2002 identification of the cavity in the reactor head. The purpose of the external assessments is to provide the NRC with an extra measure of confidence that the utility is now effective in finding and addressing problems in four crucial areas.

These assessments are to be conducted each year for a five year period.

FirstEnergy has submitted the assessment plans for two areas - operations performance and corrective action program - to the NRC for its review. The operations performance assessment is scheduled to begin August 16 and the corrective actions program assessment is scheduled to begin September 13.

The NRC is reviewing the plans and will monitor the assessments as they are being conducted. NRC staff experts have been designated to review each of the assessment areas.

FirstEnergy will submit the assessment reports to the NRC 45 days after the completion of the assessments. The assessment plans and inspection reports will be publicly available.

The team which will conduct the operations assessment currently consists of two consultants and two managers from other nuclear power stations. The other station

NRC Resident Inspection Staff

Three fully qualified resident inspectors are assigned to the Davis-Besse site on a full-time basis. The normal complement for a reactor site is two inspectors, but a third inspector was added in September 2003 to provide additional oversight. All three inspectors and their families live in the vicinity of the Davis-Besse plant.

Christopher S. "Scott" Thomas has been the senior resident inspector at Davis-Besse since January 2002. He previously was a resident inspector at the Prairie Island Nuclear Power Station in Minnesota. Scott specialized in nuclear engineering with the U.S. Navy for 15 years before joining the NRC. He holds a master's degree in environmental engineering.

John E. "Jack" Rutkowski was assigned as a resident inspector at Davis-Besse in June 2003. Prior to joining the NRC in 2002, Jack held a wide range of technical and management positions in the nuclear industry. He also served in the U.S. Navy. He holds a master's degree in nuclear science and engineering and a master's degree in business administration.

Monica P. Salter-Williams became the third member of the resident inspection staff in September 2003, coming to Davis-Besse from the NRC's Region I office. She was previously an engineer at a nuclear power plant in Pennsylvania. Monica has a master's degree in nuclear engineering from Pennsylvania State University and a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Georgia State University. She recently gave birth to her second child.

Nancy Keller is the resident office assistant. She has been the administrative backbone of the NRC resident inspectors' office since 1994.

managers are from the Seabrook Station in New Hampshire and the Arkansas Nuclear Station in Arkansas.

The team for the corrective action program assessment currently includes three Scientech, Inc. consultants, all former NRC executives or staff members. The other three members are corrective action program managers from other nuclear plants, the Robinson plant in South Carolina, the San Onofre plant in California, and the Quad Cities plant in Illinois.

FirstEnergy has not yet submitted the assessment plans for the two remaining areas - engineering and safety culture. The NRC Order requires that the outside independent assessments be completed before December 31 and then annually for the next five years.

Eight Operating License Candidates Pass NRC Examinations

NRC examiners administered initial license examination operating tests during the week of May 3, 2004, for three reactor operator and five senior reactor operator applicants. Members of the Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station Training Department administered an initial license written examination on May 10, 2004, to the applicants. The results of the operating tests and written examinations were finalized on June 4, 2004. All eight applicants passed all sections of their corresponding examinations resulting in the issuance of three senior reactor operator licenses.

Two senior reactor operator applicants and three reactor operator applicants successfully passed the tests but needed to complete six weeks on shift at greater than 20 percent power before receiving a license.

Reactor operators are licensed by the NRC to operate the plant in the control room. Senior reactor operators fill supervisory positions in the control room.

NRC Issues Inspection Report

Integrated Resident Inspection (Report No. 50-346/04-07), issued June 21, 2004, reviewed the results of seven weeks of inspection by the NRC resident inspectors and specialist inspections in emergency preparedness, radiological protection and engineering. The inspectors identified no significant findings.

NRC Inspection Reports Being Prepared

Integrated Resident Inspection (Report No. 50-346/04-08) reviews the results of seven weeks of inspection by the NRC resident inspectors.

Permanent Modifications, Changes, Tests and Experiments Inspection (Report No. 50-346/04-10) evaluates permanent modifications to the plant's safety systems and safety evaluations of changes, tests and experiments conducted at Davis-Besse in the past two years. The goal of the inspection was to make sure that the modifications did not result in a degradation in the performance of the plant's safety significant systems; that changes to the facility and the procedures have been properly reviewed and documented; and that the utility had obtained approval for the changes that required an authorization from the NRC.

The inspection reports and other documents related to the Davis-Besse plant are available on the NRC's web site at <http://www.nrc.gov> - select "Davis Besse/Reactor Vessel Head Degradation" from the Key Topics menu.

We welcome your questions and comments

If you have questions or want to provide information or express a point of view, please contact us. For feedback on this newsletter, contact Viktoria Mitlyng 630/829-9662 or Jan Strasma 630/829-9663 (toll free 800/522-3025 - ext -9662 or -9663). E-mail: opa3@nrc.gov.

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