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Contact: Viktoria Mitlyng (630) 829-9662
Prema Chandrathil (630) 829-9663

E-Mail: OPA3@nrc.gov

NRC SCHEDULES JULY 10 OPEN HOUSE TO DISCUSS MONTICELLO NUCLEAR POWER STATION PERFORMANCE AND NRC OVERSIGHT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will conduct an open house on Tuesday, July 10, in Monticello, Minn., to discuss the agency's assessment of safety performance for last year at the Monticello Nuclear Power Station.

The open house is informal and will be held from 4 to 6 p.m. CDT at the Monticello Library, 200 West 6th Street, in Monticello. The Monticello Nuclear Power Station is operated by Northern States Power Company, Minnesota, in Minnesota, about 30 miles northwest of Minneapolis.

"The NRC continually reviews the performance of the Monticello plant and the nation's other nuclear power facilities," said Regional Administrator for NRC Region III Charles Casto. "This meeting will allow us to speak directly with the local community about the plant's performance last year and the NRC's actions to make sure the plant continues to operate safely. Those actions include additional inspections in response to the events at the Fukushima Daiichi facilities to evaluate the safety of US nuclear plants. The reviews showed that Monticello and other US plants continue to operate safely."

A letter sent from the NRC Region III office to plant officials addressed the performance of the plant during 2011 and will serve as the basis for the discussion. It is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/mont_2011q4.pdf

Overall, the NRC found that the Monticello facility operated safely in 2011.

The NRC uses color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to assess nuclear plant performance. The colors start with "green" and then increase to "white," "yellow" or "red," commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved. All performance indicators and inspection findings for Monticello during 2011 were determined to be "green." Performance indicators are statistical measurements of plant and equipment performance.

Monticello will continue to receive the detailed inspection regime required for plants that are operating well and require no additional oversight.

Inspections are performed by two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the Region III Office in Lisle, Ill., and the agency's headquarters in Rockville, Md.

In addition to the day-to-day inspections performed by the resident inspectors, specific areas of plant operations to be inspected include radiation protection, independent spent fuel storage installation, problem identification and resolution, and buried piping.

The most current performance information for Monticello is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/MONT/mont_chart.html.

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