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2443 Warrenville Road

Lisle IL 60532

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

E-Mail: OPA3.RegionIII@nrc.gov

NRC SCHEDULES OPEN HOUSE FOR APRIL 5 TO DISCUSS MONTICELLO NUCLEAR POWER PLANT PERFORMANCE AND NRC OVERSIGHT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has scheduled an open house for Tuesday, April 5, to discuss with local residents the agency's assessment of safety performance for last year at the Monticello nuclear power plant and other NRC oversight activities. The plant is operated by Northern States Power Company, Minnesota and is located in Monticello, Minn., about 40 miles northwest of Minneapolis.

The open house is informal and will begin at 2:30 p.m. CDT at the Monticello Public Library, 2807 W. County Road 75, in Monticello. NRC staff will be available to answer questions on the safety performance of the Monticello plant, as well as areas of NRC's regulatory activities not specifically associated with the Monticello station.

"The NRC continually reviews the performance of the Monticello plant and the nation's other commercial nuclear power facilities," said NRC Region III Administrator Mark Satorius. "This meeting allows us to discuss our annual assessment of safety performance with members of the local community. The goal of this open house is to explain how the NRC works and answer questions from residents about nuclear regulation."

A letter sent from the NRC Region III office to plant officials addressed the performance of the plant during 2010 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_2010q4.pdf.

Overall, the NRC found that the Monticello plant operated safely in 2010. 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 2010 were determined to be "green." Performance indicators are a statistical measurement of plant and equipment performance.

Monticello will continue to receive the detailed inspection regime used by the NRC for plants that require no additional oversight. Routine 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. Among the areas of plant operations being inspected are radiation protection, dry cask spent fuel storage security and emergency preparedness exercise.

Current performance information for Monticello is available on the NRC website at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/MONT/mont_chart.html.

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