



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs Region III

2443 Warrenville Road

Lisle IL 60532

Site: www.nrc.gov

Blog: <http://public-blog.nrc-gateway.gov>

No. III-11-013

May 2, 2011

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

E-Mail: OPA3.RegionIII@nrc.gov

NRC SCHEDULES OPEN HOUSE FOR MAY 11 TO DISCUSS DRESDEN NUCLEAR POWER PLANT PERFORMANCE AND NRC OVERSIGHT

Nuclear Regulatory Commission officials have scheduled an open house for Wednesday, May 11, to discuss with local residents the agency's assessment of safety performance for last year at the Dresden Nuclear Power Station and other NRC oversight activities.

The open house is informal and will be held from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. CDT at the Morris Public Library Auditorium, 604 Liberty St., Morris, Ill. Interested members of the public are invited to attend any time during the two-hour session. The NRC's two resident inspectors and other staff members will be available to discuss the Dresden plant's performance and other issues.

The Dresden plant has two operating units, Units 2 and 3, and is operated by Exelon Generation Company east of Morris, Ill. Dresden Unit 1 has been shut down since 1978 and is in decommissioning status.

"The NRC continually reviews the performance of the Dresden facility 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 to protect people and the environment 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 open house discussion. It is available on the NRC website at:

http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/dres_2010q4.pdf

Overall, the NRC found that the Dresden facility 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 Dresden during 2010 were determined to be “green.” Performance indicators are statistical measurements of plant and equipment performance.

Dresden Unit 3 received additional regulatory oversight in the first half of 2010 as a result of a “white” inspection finding issued in August 2009 as a result of an incident in which three control rods were moved by non-licensed workers during maintenance activities while the plant was shut down. The NRC requires that control rod movements, even with the reactor shut down, must be performed by NRC-licensed reactor operators. A followup inspection in May 2010 determined that the “white” finding had been adequately resolved, and NRC regulatory oversight was returned to the normal level.

Dresden 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, in-service inspection activities for safety systems, fire protection, spent reactor fuel storage, and emergency preparedness.

The most current performance information for Dresden is available on the NRC website at: (Unit 2) http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/DRES2/dres2_chart.html and (Unit 3) http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/DRES3/dres3_chart.html.

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