



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO CONDUCT OPEN HOUSE ON MARCH 31 REGARDING ANNUAL ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE FOR BEAVER VALLEY NUCLEAR PLANT

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will conduct an informational open house on Tuesday, March 31, regarding the agency's annual assessment of safety performance for the Beaver Valley nuclear power plant.

The open house, which will take place from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at the Shippingport Community and Municipal Center, 164 State Road 3016 in Shippingport (Beaver County), Pa., will provide members of the public with an opportunity to learn first-hand from NRC staff members about performance at the plant during 2008. Unlike the standard meeting format, the setting will allow citizens to discuss plant-related topics on a one-on-one basis with NRC inspectors assigned to the plant and their NRC Region I supervisor.

Beaver Valley, which is the site of two pressurized-water reactors, is located in Shippingport. It is owned and operated by FirstEnergy Nuclear Operating Co.

Overall, Beaver Valley operated safely during 2008. At the conclusion of last year, as assessed by the NRC Reactor Oversight Process, there were no performance indicators for the plant that were other than "green" and no inspection findings that were "greater than green." Therefore, for the rest of 2009, Beaver Valley will receive the very detailed inspection regime used by the NRC for plants that are operating well. In 2008, the NRC devoted approximately 7,200 hours of inspection to the Beaver Valley facility.

"In 2008, all but one of the 26 commercial power reactors in Region I, which covers the Northeastern United States, fully met our clearly defined performance criteria. Beaver Valley was among those plants achieving those objectives. That means those plants will receive the normal level of NRC oversight this year if they continue to meet the high safety benchmarks set out for each site," said NRC Region I Administrator Samuel J. Collins. "That said, our inspectors will remain on the lookout for any problems or adverse trends that might indicate a change in performance. As always, we will not hesitate to act should we identify any safety concerns."

The NRC utilizes a combination of color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to measure plant performance. The colors start with “green” and then increase to “white,” “yellow” or “red,” commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved. The agency issues reports on performance at specific plants twice a year: During the mid-cycle, or mid-point, of the year, and at the conclusion of the year. Inspection findings and performance indicators are also updated on the NRC’s web site, www.nrc.gov, each quarter. Following the release of the annual reports every March, the NRC meets with the public in the vicinity of each plant to discuss the results. The meetings are in keeping with the agency’s commitment to transparency with regard to its activities.

The annual assessment for the Beaver Valley plant is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/bv_2008q4.pdf. The notice for the open house is available in the NRC’s Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) under accession number ML090771222. ADAMS is available at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html>. Help in using ADAMS can be obtained via the NRC’s Public Document Room at 1-800-397-4209 or 301-415-4737, or by e-mail at PDR.Resource@NRC.GOV.

Routine inspections are carried out by the two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the agency’s Region I Office in King of Prussia, Pa. Among the areas at Beaver Valley to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are radiological safety, fire protection, emergency preparedness, problem identification and resolution, and reactor coolant system dissimilar metal welds.

Current performance information for Beaver Valley Unit 1 is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/BV1/bv1_chart.html. Current performance information for Beaver Valley Unit 2 is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/BV2/bv2_chart.html.

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