



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO DISCUSS 2008 PERFORMANCE OF BROWNS FERRY NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has scheduled a meeting for Thursday, April 23, with representatives of the Tennessee Valley Authority to discuss the agency's assessment of the Browns Ferry nuclear plant's safety performance during 2008. The plant, operated by TVA, is on the Tennessee River about 10 miles southwest of Athens, Ala.

The meeting, which will be open to the public, is scheduled to begin at 1 p.m. (CDT) in the Browns Ferry Training Center Auditorium at the Browns Ferry site, 15900 Shaw Road in Athens.

After the formal presentation, NRC staff will be available to answer questions on the safety performance of the Browns Ferry plant, as well as the NRC role in ensuring safe plant operation.

"Throughout the year, we inspect and review the performance of the Browns Ferry plant and all commercial nuclear plants," NRC Region II Administrator Luis Reyes said. "We issue several inspection reports during the year and an overall annual assessment. This meeting allows us to discuss that assessment with the company, local officials and people near the plant."

A letter sent from the NRC Region II office to plant officials addresses the performance of the plant during 2008 and will serve as the basis for the meeting discussion. It is available on the NRC web site at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/bf_2008q4.pdf.

The NRC found that Browns Ferry's 2008 performance met all NRC safety objectives. During 2008, Units 2 and 3 performed at a level that required no additional NRC oversight. Unit 1 performed at this level for the last three quarters of the year. However, during the first quarter of 2008, Unit 1 was at an increased oversight level based on the number of unplanned scrams, or shutdowns in 2007. A supplemental NRC inspection in late 2008 found that the plant staff had determined the areas needing improvement and taken appropriate corrective actions.

In the 2007 assessment, the NRC identified a substantive cross-cutting issue associated with inappropriate and untimely corrective actions. Although the 2008 assessment determined that TVA had made improvements in this area, the NRC plans to conduct an additional inspection later this year to assess whether the corrective action issue can be cleared.

Since all three units are not subject to additional oversight this year, the NRC plans to continue conducting the very detailed inspections required at those plants operating well. The agency will also complete some generic inspections in the areas of spent fuel storage, groundwater protection, problem identification and resolution, and operator licensing exams at the Browns Ferry plant in 2009.

Current performance information for Browns Ferry Unit 1 is available on the NRC web site at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/BF1/bf1_chart.html. Current performance information for Unit 2 is at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/BF2/bf2_chart.html and Unit 3 is at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/BF3/bf3_chart.html.

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