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CONTACT: Roger Hannah (404) 562-4417
Joey Ledford (404) 562-4416

E-mail: OPA2@nrc.gov

NRC BANS FORMER FARLEY NUCLEAR PLANT SECURITY OFFICER FROM NRC-LICENSED ACTIVITIES

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued an order to Robert Robbirds banning him from involvement in NRC-licensed activities for three years. Robbirds is a former security officer at the Farley nuclear power plant, operated by Southern Nuclear Operating Company near Columbia, Ala. about 18 miles south of Dothan.

Earlier this year, the NRC completed an investigation that reviewed a June 2008 incident where Robbirds consumed alcohol before arriving for work, and entered the plant with alcohol in water bottles. After Robbirds had been on duty as an armed responder for five to six hours, he was found by plant employees to be unresponsive and not fit for duty.

“The actions of this former officer demonstrated a complete lack of regard for his duties and NRC requirements,” said NRC Region II Deputy Administrator for Operations Victor McCree. “Fortunately, no actual security events occurred during that time, but the NRC takes any degradation in security very seriously.”

In addition to the three-year prohibition, Robbirds must notify the NRC during the year following that period if he accepts employment involving NRC-licensed activities. Robbirds has 20 days to either request an extension or a hearing before the imposition of the order.

Southern Nuclear was also cited for a violation, but the company acknowledged the seriousness of the officer’s actions and took steps to correct the violation and prevent recurrence. Because the company identified the issue and took corrective actions, the NRC is not proposing a fine, but the violation could result in increased inspections.

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