



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC SCHEDULES OPEN HOUSE TO DISCUSS 2009 PERFORMANCE OF ST. LUCIE NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has scheduled an open house for Tuesday, May 4, and will be available to discuss and answer questions about the agency's assessment of safety performance during 2009 at the St. Lucie nuclear power plant. The plant, operated by Florida Power and Light Co., is located in Jensen Beach, Fla., east of Port St. Lucie.

The open house is informal and scheduled to begin at 1 p.m. at the St. Lucie Energy Encounter Facility on Hutchinson Island, located at 6501 S A1A in Jensen Beach, Fla. During the open house, NRC staff will be available to answer questions on the safety performance of the St. Lucie plant last year, as well as the NRC's role in ensuring safe plant operation.

"Every year, the NRC evaluates the safety performance of nuclear plants in a systematic and detailed way," NRC Region II Administrator Luis Reyes said. "These reviews allow us to respond to ongoing issues, if needed, and to plan our future inspections. This open house gives local officials and citizens near the St. Lucie plant an opportunity to learn more about our oversight and is consistent with our commitment to openness and transparency."

A letter sent from the NRC Region II office to plant officials addresses the performance of the plant during 2009 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/stl_2009q4.pdf.

The NRC found that the St. Lucie plant's 2009 performance met all of the agency's safety objectives and was at a level that would have resulted in no additional NRC oversight. This year, the NRC had planned to conduct the very detailed inspections required at those plants that are operating well, but a recent finding related to air intrusion into the system that uses water to cool some safety equipment changes the NRC's assessment of performance and results in additional oversight. In addition, the agency will complete some plant-specific activities at St. Lucie related to operator licensing, managing gas accumulation in emergency core cooling and reactor coolant system welds.

The NRC uses color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to assess plant performance. The colors start with “green,” which has very low safety significance, to “white,” “yellow” or “red,” based on the significance of the issues. Inspection findings and performance indicators are updated on the NRC’s web site (www.nrc.gov) each quarter.

Current performance information for St. Lucie Unit 1 is available on the NRC web site at www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/STL1/stl1_chart.html. Current performance information for Unit 2 is at www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/STL2/stl2_chart.html.

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