



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs, Region II
245 Peachtree Center Ave. NE, Suite 1200
Atlanta, GA 30303-1257
Web Site: www.nrc.gov

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CONTACT: Roger Hannah (404) 997-4417
Joey Ledford (404) 997-4416

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E-mail: OPA2@nrc.gov

NRC SCHEDULES MEETING TO DISCUSS 2011 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FOR OCONEE NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has scheduled a meeting for Monday, April 9, to discuss the agency's assessment of safety performance during 2011 at the Oconee nuclear power plant. The plant, operated by Duke Energy, is near Seneca, S.C., about 30 miles west of Greenville, S.C.

The meeting, in the Oconee World of Energy, 7812 Rochester Highway in Seneca, will begin with an NRC presentation at 6:30 p.m. The public will have opportunities to ask questions on the safety performance of the Oconee plant, as well as the NRC role in ensuring safe plant operations.

"Last year, our inspectors spent many hours ensuring that the Oconee plant met NRC safety requirements and protected both people living near the plant and the overall environment," NRC Region II Administrator Victor McCree said.

NRC inspectors also looked at whether there were immediate safety concerns at Oconee and other U.S. plants after the March events at the Fukushima Daiichi plant in Japan. Those reviews found that the plants remained safe.

A letter sent from the NRC Region II office to plant officials, 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/oco_2011q4.pdf.

The NRC found that the Oconee plant met all NRC safety objectives during 2011. However, all three Oconee units will be subject to additional NRC oversight due to a yellow inspection finding on Dec. 6, 2011 related to a failure to adequately maintain the plant's standby shutdown systems. These systems would be used to safely shut down the units if normal and emergency systems are unavailable.

The NRC determined that the standby shutdown systems issue will be considered an "old design issue," which means the yellow finding will not impact Oconee's regulatory standing. However, the plant will undergo a supplemental inspection to review the actions taken to address the yellow finding.

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.

In addition to detailed baseline NRC inspections, Oconee will receive generic inspections related to buried piping, operator licensing examinations, radiological hazard assessment and triennial fire protection inspections. The NRC staff will also continue its review of ongoing significant modifications to the plant.

Current performance information for Oconee Unit 1 is available on the NRC web site at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/OCO1/oco1_chart.html . Current information for Units 2 and 3 is at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/OCO2/oco2_chart.html and www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/OCO3/oco3_chart.html .

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