



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

No. II-12-012

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

April 5, 2012

E-mail: OPA2@nrc.gov

NRC SCHEDULES MEETINGS TO DISCUSS ASSESSMENT OF WATTS BAR 1 NUCLEAR PLANT AND CONSTRUCTION INSPECTIONS FOR WATTS BAR 2

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission officials have scheduled a meeting and open house on Thursday, April 12 to provide information on the agency's assessment of safety performance for Unit 1 at the Watts Bar nuclear power plant during 2011. The NRC will also provide a presentation on the agency's assessment of construction activities at Watts Bar Unit 2 at a meeting following the Unit 1 session.

An informal open house is scheduled to start at 1 p.m. EDT at the Comfort Inn, located at 2811 Decatur Pike in Athens, Tenn. The NRC staff will make a presentation on the safety performance of Watts Bar Unit 1 at 1:30 and will be available to answer questions. A presentation on Unit 2 is scheduled to begin at 2:30 p.m. in the same room and will also be followed by a question and answer session.

The Watts Bar plant, which has one operating pressurized-water reactor and one unit currently completing construction, is located near Spring City, Tenn., about 60 miles southwest of Knoxville. It is owned and operated by the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Overall, the NRC staff concluded that Watts Bar Unit 1 operated safely in 2011, and there were no inspection findings or performance indicators that would cause the NRC to increase its level of oversight and inspection. Based on the plant's performance, the NRC staff plans to continue the detailed routine inspections all nuclear power plants receive.

The NRC uses color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to assess plant performance. The colors start with "green," and escalate 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.

"During 2011, our inspectors spent many hours ensuring that the Watts Bar plant met NRC safety requirements and protected both people living near the plant and the environment," NRC Region II Administrator Victor McCree said.

NRC inspectors also looked at whether there were immediate safety concerns at Watts Bar and other U.S. plants after the March 2011 events at the Fukushima Daiichi plant in Japan. Those reviews found that the plants remained safe.

The annual assessment letter for Watts Bar Unit 1 is available on the NRC web site at www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/wb_2011q4.pdf.

Routine inspections are carried out by the NRC resident inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the Region II office in Atlanta. Among the areas at the Watts Bar plant to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are modifications, problem identification and resolution, underground piping and operator licensing examinations.

Current performance information for Watts Bar Unit 1 is available on the NRC web site at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/WB1/wb1_chart.html.

The NRC assessment of Unit 2 found that, overall, TVA conducted construction activities in compliance with NRC regulations and the conditions of the plant's construction permit. Based on that assessment, the NRC will not expand its activities beyond the detailed inspections planned and currently being conducted. However, NRC inspectors will continue to assess corrective actions for some issues identified during 2011.

Information on Watts Bar Unit 2 can be found at www.nrc.gov/info-finder/reactor/wb/watts-bar.html.

###

News releases are available through a free [Listserv subscription](#) or by clicking on the [EMAIL UPDATES](#) link on the NRC homepage (www.nrc.gov). E-mail notifications are sent to subscribers when news releases are posted to NRC's website. For the latest news, follow the NRC on www.twitter.com/NRCgov.