



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

2443 Warrenville Road

Lisle IL 60532

Web Site: <http://www.nrc.gov> E-mail: opa3@nrc.gov

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CONTACT: Viktoria Mitlyng (630) 829-9662

NRC to Discuss 2006 Performance Assessment for Prairie Island Nuclear Power Plant

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of Nuclear Management Co. on Tuesday, Apr. 3, to discuss the agency's assessment of safety performance for last year at the Prairie Island Nuclear Power Plant. The plant is located at Welch, Minn.

The meeting, which will be open to the public, is scheduled to begin at 6 p.m. at the Prairie Island Training Center Auditorium, 1660 Wakonade Dr. West, in Welch. The NRC staff will present the results of the assessment and be available to respond to questions or comments from the public before the close of the meeting.

The public may also participate in the meeting through a telephone conference call. For instructions on how to participate, interested persons should contact Bruce Burgess at 630/829-9629.

"The NRC continually reviews the performance of the Prairie Island plant and the nation's other commercial nuclear power facilities," NRC Region III Administrator James Caldwell said. "This meeting will provide an opportunity for a discussion of our annual assessment of safety performance with the company and with local officials and residents who live near the plant. Our goal is to explain the NRC oversight process and make as much information as possible available to the public regarding our regulation of these facilities."

A letter sent from the NRC Region III Office to plant officials addresses the performance of the plant during the period and will serve as the basis for the meeting discussion. It is available on the NRC website at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/prai_2006q4.pdf.

The NRC's assessment concluded that the Prairie Island plant operated safely during the period. The NRC uses color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to assess nuclear plant performance. The colors start with "green" and then increase to "white," "yellow" or "red," commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved.

All of the inspection findings and performance indicators for Prairie Island during 2006 were determined to be "green." As a result of this performance, the NRC will conduct the normal, baseline level of inspections during the upcoming year.

However, on Sept. 28, 2006, the NRC issued the plant a Notice of Violation for the failure to provide complete and accurate information on two applicants seeking a nuclear operator's license. The NRC will review the plant's corrective actions related to this issue in October 2007.

Routine inspections are performed by two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the Region III Office in Lisle, Ill., and the agency's headquarters in Rockville, Md. Among the areas of plant operations to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are the operation of the independent spent fuel storage installation; radiological environmental monitoring program; and identification and resolution of problems.

Current performance information for [name] is available on the NRC's web site at:
http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/PRAI1/prai1_chart.html and
http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/PRAI2/prai2_chart.html .

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