



NRC NEWS

UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, REGION II

61 Forsyth Street SW, Atlanta GA 30303

Web Site: www.nrc.gov

No. II-07-008

CONTACT: Ken Clark (404)562-4416
Roger Hannah (404)562-4417

April 4, 2007

E-mail: OPA2@nrc.gov

NRC TO HOLD PUBLIC MEETING AT SWEETWATER ON APRIL 9 TO DISCUSS 2006 PERFORMANCE AT WATTS BAR NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff is scheduled to meet with Tennessee Valley Authority officials in Sweetwater on April 9 to discuss the NRC's annual assessment of safety performance at the Watts Bar nuclear power plant, located near Spring City, Tenn., for calendar year 2006.

The 2:00 p.m. meeting, at the Best Western Motel at 1421 Murrays Chapel Road in Sweetwater, is open to public observation. Before the meeting ends, NRC staff will be available to answer public questions on the plant's safety performance, as well as the agency's role in ensuring safe operation of the facility.

"Each year the NRC staff rates the performance of the Watts Bar plant and all of the nation's other commercial nuclear power plants," NRC Region II Administrator William Travers said. "This meeting gives us a chance to discuss our assessment with the company, with local officials and with residents near the plant. Our aim is to make this information available to the public and answer any questions people may have about our oversight."

The NRC report says the Watts Bar plant operated safely during 2006. The NRC uses color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to assess performance. The colors start with "green" and increase to "white," "yellow" or "red," commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved. The report said TVA performance at Watts Bar during 2006 was classified as Green, meaning that any NRC inspection findings were of very low safety significance.

Based on the plant's performance during 2006, the NRC said Watts Bar will receive the baseline, or normal, level of inspections during 2007. The NRC plans to conduct additional non-routine inspections of the plant's reactor pressure vessel head and penetration nozzle examinations and to review containment emergency recirculation sump blockage calculations and commitments. The NRC also has scheduled initial reactor operator licensing examinations at Watts Bar during 2007.

A letter sent from the NRC Region II 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 web site at www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/wb_2006q4.pdf.

Routine inspections are performed by NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by specialists from the Region II Office in Atlanta, and the agency's headquarters in Rockville, Md.

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

###

News releases are available through a free list serve subscription at the following Web address:
<http://www.nrc.gov/public-involve/listserver.html> . The NRC homepage at www.nrc.gov also offers a SUBSCRIBE link.
E-mail notifications are sent to subscribers when news releases are posted to NRC's Web site.