



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs, Region I
475 Allendale Road, King of Prussia, Pa.

www.nrc.gov

No. I-07-025

Contact: Diane Screnci, 610/337-5330
Neil Sheehan, 610/337-5331

May 4, 2007

E-mail: opa1@nrc.gov

NRC TO DISCUSS 2006 ASSESSMENT FOR VERMONT YANKEE NUCLEAR PLANT AT PUBLIC MEETING IN BRATTLEBORO, VT., ON MAY 14

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission's annual assessment of safety performance at the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant, in Vernon, Vt., will be the subject of a public meeting on Monday, May 14.

NRC staff will meet with representatives of plant owner Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc., at 6 p.m. to discuss the assessment, which covers the period from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2006, and was documented in a March 2nd letter to the company. The session will take place at the Quality Inn, 1380 Putney Road in Brattleboro, Vt.

Before the meeting is adjourned, NRC staff will be available to answer questions from the public on the performance of the Vermont Yankee plant, as well as the role of the NRC in providing oversight of plant safety.

"Each year we size up plant performance during the previous calendar year, with the overarching goal of ensuring that facilities are achieving the levels of safety that are essential to protecting the public and the environment," said NRC Region I Administrator Samuel J. Collins, who noted the agency also conducts mid-year assessments of performance. "At the May 14th meeting, NRC staff will talk to members of the public about how we go about evaluating Vermont Yankee and other nuclear power plants across the nation and will also answer questions from the audience."

Overall, the Vermont Yankee plant operated safely during 2006. The NRC utilizes color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to assess nuclear power plant performance. The colors start with "green" and then increase to "white," "yellow" or "red," commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved. At the conclusion of last year, all of the performance indicators for Vermont Yankee were determined to be "green." With one exception, there were no inspection findings for the plant that were identified as greater than "green" at the time.

There was a "white" (low to moderate safety significance) inspection finding in the area of radiation safety that was finalized on Dec. 20, 2006, and that remains open. That finding stems from a shipment that went from Vermont Yankee to a Pennsylvania nuclear power plant last summer. Specifically, a package containing a radioactively contaminated control rod crusher/shearer was found

to exceed U.S. Department of Transportation radiation limits upon its arrival at the Susquehanna nuclear plant on Sept. 1, 2006. However, no actual public radiation exposure occurred during the shipment because the package's surface was inaccessible to members of the public. In response to the "white" finding, the NRC will conduct a supplemental inspection at the plant in 2007 to determine if the problem has been properly addressed.

Routine inspections are performed by two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the Region I Office in King of Prussia, Pa. Among the areas of performance at Vermont Yankee to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are activities associated with the installation of a dry cask storage facility for spent nuclear fuel, emergency planning, radiological safety and the plant's problem identification and resolution program.

The annual assessment letter for Vermont Yankee is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/vy_2006q4.pdf. The notice for the meeting, with agenda attached, is available in the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) under accession number ML071200146. The meeting slides are available under accession number ML071150269. ADAMS is accessible at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. Help in using ADAMS is available via the NRC's Public Document Room at 1-800-397-4209 or 301-415-4737, or by e-mail at PDR@NRC.GOV.

Current performance information for the Vermont Yankee plant is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/VY/vy_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.