



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC TO DISCUSS 2005 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FOR KEWAUNEE NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of Dominion Energy Kewaunee, Inc. on Wednesday, March 22, to discuss the agency's assessment of safety performance for last year at the Kewaunee Nuclear Power Plant. The plant is located at Kewaunee, Wis.

The meeting, which will be open to the public for observation, is scheduled to begin at 6 p.m. at the Kewaunee Municipal Building Council Chamber Conference Room, 401 5th Street, Kewaunee. The NRC will respond to questions or comments before the close of the meeting.

"The NRC continually reviews the performance of the Kewaunee 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 web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/kewa_2005q4.pdf.

The NRC's assessment concluded that the Kewaunee plant operated safely during the period. However, the letter noted a "moderate degradation in safety performance." 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.

During 2005, NRC inspectors identified one "yellow" finding. It involved a design flaw which could have led to a failure to protect safety-significant equipment from the effects of flooding in the turbine building.

There was also a "white" finding involving a design flaw affecting a safety-significant plant system.

The NRC will conduct follow-up inspections to review the plant's actions to address both issues.

The letter also identified weaknesses in the plant's corrective action program. Dominion Energy Kewaunee and the NRC will discuss the issue during the March 22 meeting. The NRC will continue to focus on the plant's corrective action program in its follow-up and routine inspections.

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 effluent monitoring system, radioactive waste processing and transportation, and maintenance.

Current performance information for Kewaunee is available on the NRC's web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/KEWA/kewa_chart.html.

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