



NRC NEWS

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61 Forsyth Street SW, Atlanta GA 30303

Web Site: www.nrc.gov

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

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E-mail: OPA2@nrc.gov

NRC TO DISCUSS 2004 PERFORMANCE AT HATCH NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff are scheduled to meet with Southern Nuclear Operating Company officials April 13 to discuss the NRC's annual assessment of safety performance at the Hatch nuclear power plant, located near Baxley, Ga. The period covered is the calendar year 2004.

The 4 p.m. meeting at Southeastern Tech in Vidalia 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 Hatch 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."

Overall, the Hatch plant operated safely during 2004. The NRC uses color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to assess nuclear plant performance. The colors start with "green" and increase to "white," "yellow" or "red," commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved. The Hatch plant had nothing classified beyond "green" during 2004. Based on these results and overall performance, Hatch will receive the baseline, or normal, level of inspections during 2005.

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/hat_2004q4.pdf.

Routine inspections are performed by NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the Region II Office in Atlanta, and the agency's headquarters in Rockville, Md. In addition to the baseline inspections in 2005, the NRC plans inspections of the under-construction spent fuel storage installation.

Current information for the Hatch plant is available on the NRC web site at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/HAT1/hat1_chart.html and www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/HAT2/hat2_chart.html.

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