



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO DISCUSS 2004 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FOR BRAIDWOOD NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of Exelon Generation Company on Wednesday, May 11, to discuss the agency's assessment of safety performance for last year at the Braidwood Nuclear Power Plant. The plant is located near Braidwood, Ill.

The meeting, which will be open to the public for observation, is scheduled to begin at 4:30 p.m. at Fossil Ridge Library, 386 Kennedy Road, Braidwood.

Before the meeting is adjourned, NRC staff will be available to answer questions from the public on the safety performance of the Braidwood plant, as well as the role of the NRC in ensuring safe plant operation.

"The NRC continually reviews the performance of the Braidwood 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/brai_2004q4.pdf.

The NRC's assessment concluded that the Braidwood 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 NRC inspection findings for Braidwood during 2004 were determined to be "green." One Unit 1 performance indicator was "white," indicating low to moderate safety significance, during the first quarter of 2004. This "white" performance indicator stemmed from two failures of a backup cooling system pump to operate during testing in 2003. A followup inspection by the NRC showed the the Braidwood staff had taken appropriate corrective action, and the performance indicator was returned to "green" for the remainder of the year.

As a result of this performance, the NRC will conduct the normal, baseline level of inspections during the upcoming year.

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 safety system design, maintenance, emergency planning, problem identification and resolution, and worker radiation protection.

Current performance information for Braidwood is available on the NRC's web site at:
http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/BRAI1/brai1_chart.html and
http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/BRAI2/brai2_chart.html .

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