



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO HOLD PUBLIC MEETINGS IN ALABAMA JUNE 8 ON CHANGES IN REACTOR OVERSIGHT AND LATEST ASSESSMENT OF FARLEY PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has scheduled two public meetings for Thursday, June 8 -- one on the latest performance review results for Southern Nuclear Operating Company's Farley Nuclear Plant in Alabama, and the other meeting on the NRC's reactor oversight process.

The first meeting will be held at 2 p.m. CDT at the Farley plant visitors center auditorium on Highway 95 near Columbia, Alabama. NRC staff members will discuss Farley's latest plant performance review results, and will be available after the meeting to answer any questions from media or members of the public.

The Plant Performance Reviews are used to evaluate safety performance information and identify any changes in plant performance so the NRC can allocate inspection resources appropriately. The text of each PPR letter, including the one on Farley, is available from the NRC Office of Public Affairs and has been posted on the NRC web site at: www.nrc.gov/OPA/ppr.

Current performance information for the two units at Farley is available on the NRC web site at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/FAR1/far1_chart.html and www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/FAR2/far2_chart.html.

The second meeting will begin at 7 p.m. CDT in the Houston County Administration Building in Dothan. NRC officials will describe the new oversight process which began at the Farley plant in April. Members of the public will have the opportunity to ask questions during the meeting.

The new oversight process uses more objective, timely, and safety-significant criteria in assessing performance, while seeking to more effectively and efficiently regulate the industry. Under the new process, inspections by NRC resident inspectors and regional office-based personnel are supplemented by statistical measures of plant activities called performance indicators. These performance indicators measure important safety aspects of plant operations, including the viability of redundant safety systems, emergency planning, radiation protection, and security measures.

Inspection findings and performance indicators for each nuclear power plant are posted on the NRC's web site every three months. The safety significance of each inspection finding or performance indicator is characterized by a color -- green, white, yellow, or red.

The NRC response to the inspection findings and performance indicators will be based on the significance of the items. A green finding receives normal NRC oversight, while white, yellow, or red assessments receive increasing NRC involvement. Multiple red findings could result in a plant shutdown.

A plain language summary of the reactor oversight process is available from the NRC Office of Public Affairs or on the web site at: www.nrc.gov/OPA/primer.htm.

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