



NRC NEWS

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OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, REGION II

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 STAFF TO HOLD PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS RECENT EXTRA INSPECTION OF OCONEE NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

Officials of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission will meet with Duke Energy Corporation officials at 1:00 p.m. Thursday, January 23, in the World of Energy Center, 7800 Rochester Highway, in Seneca, South Carolina. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the results of an NRC supplemental inspection performed at the Oconee nuclear plant near Seneca to assess the company's corrective actions associated with inadequate reactor building containment closure procedures and the unavailability of an emergency feedwater pump.

The NRC's inspection was completed in early November and included a thorough review of the issues and the plant staff's response, evaluation and corrective actions. The inspection report was issued in early December.

The meeting is between the NRC and Duke Energy, but is open to observation by interested members of the public. NRC officials will also be available prior to its conclusion to answer any questions observers may have.

During the fall 2000 refueling outage of Oconee Unit 1, the NRC identified that if certain accident situations occurred while the reactor building containment was open, operators would not have had adequate instructions or procedures to ensure the containment was closed, and that finding was designated as White. In addition, there was a White performance indicator at the plant related to the unavailability of an emergency feedwater pump. Under its safety significance determination process, NRC officials classify certain conditions at nuclear power plants as being one of four colors which delineate increasing levels of safety significance, progressing from green to white to yellow to red. The White inspection finding means that particular issue was of low to moderate safety significance, and the White performance indicator indicates that performance was outside of the expected range but still met the safety objectives.

Duke Energy has taken steps to address both issues and the NRC staff is satisfied with the steps the company has taken. Both the supplemental inspection and public meeting are requirements of the NRC oversight program based on the plant's performance level.

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