



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC TO DISCUSS 2004 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FOR PRAIRIE ISLAND NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of Nuclear Management Company on Tuesday, April 12, to discuss the agency's assessment of safety performance for the year 2004 at the Prairies Island Nuclear Power Plant. The plant is located at Welch, Minn.

The meeting, which will be open to the public for observation, is scheduled to begin at 5:30 p.m. at the Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant Training Center, 1660 Wakonade Drive West, Welch, Minn.

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

"The NRC continually reviews the performance of the Prairie Island 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/prai_2004q4.pdf

The NRC's assessment concluded that the Prairie Island 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 inspection findings and performance indicators for Prairie Island during 2004 were determined to be "green." 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, IL, and the agency's headquarters in Rockville, Md. Among the areas of plant operations to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are reactor vessel head replacement, safety system design and performance capability, problem identification and resolution, and fire protection.

Current performance information for Prairie Island is available on the NRC's web site at:
http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/PRAI1/prai1_chart.html and
http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/PRAI2/prai2_chart.html

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