



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

2443 Warrenville Road

Lisle IL 60532

Web Site: <http://www.nrc.gov> E-mail: opa3@nrc.gov

No. III-06-015

April 7, 2006

CONTACT: Jan Strasma (630) 829-9663
Viktoria Mitlyng (630) 829-9662

NRC TO DISCUSS 2005 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FOR PRAIRIE ISLAND NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of Nuclear Management Co. on Wednesday, April 12, to discuss the agency's assessment of safety performance for last year at the Prairie Island Nuclear Power Plant. The plant is located near Red Wing, Minn.

The meeting, which will be open to the public, is scheduled to begin at 6 p.m. in Classroom 3 of the Prairie Island Training Center, 1660 Wakonade Dr. West, Welch, Minn. The NRC staff will present the results of the assessment and be available to respond to questions or comments from the public before the close of the meeting.

"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_2005q4.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 2005 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.

The safety significance of one issue from 2005 remains under review. The NRC has identified an apparent violation of the agency's emergency planning requirements which has been preliminarily evaluated to be a "white" finding, one of low to moderate safety significance. The NRC found that the plant's emergency plan did not meet the requirements for actions to be taken in the event of flooding at

the plant. Once the final safety significance has been determined, additional inspections may be scheduled to review the issue.

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 emergency preparedness, security, maintenance, fire protection, dry cask spent fuel storage, and a review of the planned replacement of the Unit 1 reactor vessel head.

Current performance information for Prairie Island is available on the NRC's web site at: (Unit 1) http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/PRAI1/prai1_chart.html and (Unit 2) http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/PRAI2/prai2_chart.html.

###