



NRC NEWS

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NRC SCHEDULES OPEN HOUSE ON PERFORMANCE OF WATTS BAR UNIT 1 FOLLOWED BY MEETING TO DISCUSS UNIT 2 CONSTRUCTION

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has scheduled an open house for Tuesday, April 14, and will be available to discuss and answer questions about the agency's assessment of safety performance during 2008 at the Watts Bar nuclear power plant. The plant, operated by the Tennessee Valley Authority, is located about 10 miles south of Spring City, Tenn., which is about 60 miles southwest of Knoxville. Watts Bar Unit 1 has been in operation since 1996 and TVA is currently completing construction of Unit 2.

The open house is informal and scheduled to run from 5-6:30 p.m. in the Magnuson Hotel, 1421 Murray's Chapel Road in Sweetwater, Tenn. During the open house, NRC staff will be available to answer questions on the safety performance of Watts Bar Unit 1 last year, as well as the NRC role in ensuring safe plant operation.

"Throughout the year, we inspect and review the performance of the Watts Bar plant and all commercial nuclear plants," NRC Region II Administrator Luis Reyes said. "We issue several inspection reports during the year and an overall annual assessment. This open house allows us to discuss that assessment with local officials and people near the plant, and answer any questions they may have."

At the conclusion of the open house, NRC staff will make a brief presentation on current oversight activities for Unit 2 construction, and be available to answer questions about that construction oversight.

A letter sent from the NRC Region II office to plant officials addresses the performance of the plant during 2008 and will serve as the basis for the meeting discussion. It is available on the NRC web site at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/wb_2008q4.pdf.

The NRC found that Watts Bar's 2008 performance met all NRC safety objectives. This year, the NRC plans to continue to conduct the very detailed inspections required at those plants operating well. In addition, the agency will complete some generic inspections related to operator licensing examinations, ground water protection and reactor cooling system welds at Watts Bar in 2009.

Performance at Watts Bar Unit 1 for all of 2008 was at a level that resulted in no additional NRC oversight.

Current performance information for Watts Bar Unit 1 is available on the NRC web site at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/WB1/wb1_chart.html.

Information on Watts Bar Unit 2 can be found at: www.nrc.gov/reactors/plant-specific-items/watts-bar.html.

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