



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs, Region II
61 Forsyth Street SW, Atlanta GA 30303
Web Site: www.nrc.gov

No. II-09-029

CONTACT: Roger Hannah (404) 562-4417
Joey Ledford (404) 562-4416

April 27, 2009

E-mail: OPA2@nrc.gov

NRC SCHEDULES OPEN HOUSE TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ON 2008 PERFORMANCE OF OCONEE NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has scheduled an open house for Thursday, May 7, and will be available to discuss and answer questions about the agency's assessment of safety performance during 2008 at the Oconee nuclear power plant. The plant, operated by Duke Energy, is near Seneca, S.C. about 30 miles west of Greenville.

The open house is informal and scheduled from 6-8 p.m. in the Oconee World of Energy, 7812 Rochester Highway in Seneca.

NRC staff will be available to answer questions on the safety performance of the Oconee plant, as well as the NRC role in ensuring safe plant operation.

"Throughout the year, we inspect and review the performance of the Oconee 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."

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/oco_2008q4.pdf.

The NRC found that the Oconee plant met all NRC safety objectives during 2008, and performance for Units 2 and 3 was at a level that resulted in no additional NRC oversight. Unit 1 performance was at that level for the first three quarters of the year, but an issue with a voltage regulator maintenance procedure identified in the fourth quarter placed Unit 1 under increased NRC oversight including a supplemental inspection currently planned for this summer.

In addition to the supplemental inspection, the NRC plans to continue to conduct the very detailed inspections required at those plants operating well. Those inspections are by NRC resident inspectors assigned to the site supplemented by more specific inspections completed by region-based NRC inspectors. In addition to the detailed routine inspections, the agency will

complete some generic inspections including operator licensing examinations, emergency response, spent fuel storage and ground water protection at Oconee in 2009. The NRC staff will also continue its review of issues associated with fire, external flooding, tornado and high energy line break mitigation.

Current performance information for Oconee Unit 1 is available on the NRC web site at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/OCO1/oco1_chart.html. Current information for Units 2 and 3 is at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/OCO2/oco2_chart.html and www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/OCO3/oco3_chart.html.

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