



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC TO DISCUSS 2009 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FOR KEWAUNEE NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of Dominion Energy Kewaunee Inc. on Wednesday, April 21, to discuss the agency's assessment of safety performance for last year at the Kewaunee Nuclear Power Plant. The plant is located in Kewaunee, Wisc.

The meeting, which will be open to the public, is scheduled to begin at 6:00 p.m. CDT at the Kewaunee Municipal Building, Council Chamber Conference Room, 401 5th St., Kewaunee. The NRC staff will present the results of the assessment, talk about the NRC, and its range of activities, 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 Kewaunee plant and the nation's other commercial nuclear power facilities," NRC Region III Administrator Mark Satorius said. "This meeting allows us to discuss our annual assessment of safety performance with the company and area residents. One of NRC's main goals is to explain to people in the community how the agency regulates nuclear power plants."

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/kewa_2009q4.pdf.

The NRC's assessment concluded Kewaunee 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.

NRC inspectors identified one "white" finding of low to moderate safety significance in 2008. This finding involved the inability of effluent radiation monitors to accurately signal utility staff to declare an "Alert" if radiation release levels were rising. An Alert is the second lowest of four levels

of emergency classifications used by the NRC. This finding was closed in June 2009 after the NRC conducted increased inspections and reviewed the utility's actions to correct the problem and prevent recurrence. The letter also states that this failure could have potentially delayed the ability of state and local officials to respond to an emergency.

Kewaunee will continue to receive the detailed inspection regime used by the NRC for plants. 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, radiation monitoring and problem identification and resolution.

Current performance information for Kewaunee is available on the NRC's web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/KEWA/kewa_chart.html.

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