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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 23, 1996

NRC AUGMENTED INSPECTION TEAM CONTINUES WORK  
DURING ANO UNIT 1 RESTART

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's augmented inspection team will continue its fact-finding efforts at Arkansas Nuclear One, Unit 1, a nuclear power plant near Russellville, Arkansas, during restart of the plant. Entergy Operations, Inc., the plant licensee, is planning to restart as early as today.

NRC Regional Administrator L. Joe Callan said, "The NRC will not object to restarting the plant because the root cause for Sunday's trip and the root cause of the stuck safety relief valve have been identified by the licensee and independently confirmed by our inspectors. Our inspections have concluded that all the safety questions raised by Sunday's automatic shutdown have been adequately resolved to support plant restart."

The main feedwater pump malfunctioned as a result of a failed speed sensing probe, and the main steam safety relief valve failed to close due to a stem nut that was mispositioned. The main feedwater pump has been repaired and the safety valve has been locked shut until repairs can be completed. The plant has 16 main steam safety valves and 14 are required for safe operation.

The augmented inspection team has approximately one day's efforts remaining to ensure that all the desired information is collected for in-office review. Analysis of this information will identify long-term lessons to be learned that may be applicable to both ANO and other, similar plants.

Early Sunday morning, May 19, a main feedwater pump malfunctioned, causing the reactor to shut down while operating at 100 percent power. In a normal response, main steam safety valves opened to release non-radioactive steam to the atmosphere. However, one safety valve failed to close as designed and one of the plant's steam generators boiled dry as a result.

In response to these events, the NRC sent a five-man augmented inspection team to ANO on Wednesday, May 22. The team continues examining the facts surrounding the event and is expected to complete its work on Friday. The team will monitor the plant startup along with NRC resident site inspectors.

A meeting that will be open for public observation will be held next week at which the NRC will discuss the findings of the augmented inspection team with Entergy, and a written report of the inspection findings will be issued in about three weeks.

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