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ARKANSAS PLANTS RATED "SUPERIOR" IN THREE AREAS
"GOOD" IN ONE IN LATEST NRC ASSESSMENT

The Arkansas Nuclear One nuclear power plant has received performance ratings of "superior" in plant operations, engineering and plant support, and "good" in maintenance in the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's latest systematic assessment of licensee performance (SALP).

The SALP report was sent Aug. 2 to Entergy Operations, Inc., operator of the twin reactor facility situated near Russellville, Arkansas. It evaluates plant safety performance from January 8, 1995, through July 6, 1996.

NRC and Entergy officials will discuss the report during a meeting set for 11 a.m. August 29 in the Reeves E. Ritchie Training Facility in Russellville. The meeting will be open for public observation. NRC officials will be available afterwards to speak with reporters, state and local officials, and members of the public.

NRC systematic assessment reports rate licensees in four functional areas--plant operations, maintenance, engineering, and plant support--and assigns ratings of Category 1, 2, or 3 corresponding to superior, good or adequate safety performance. The ANO report rates the plant "Category 1" in plant operations, engineering and plant support, indicating superior performance. It rates maintenance as "Category 2" indicating good safety performance.

In his cover letter to the report, NRC Regional Administrator L. Joe Callan said continued strong performance by licensed operators was noteworthy in the operations area. He also attributed improvements in the plant's engineering activities to strong self assessments and more thorough design control and operations support work.

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Discussing the plant's rating decline in maintenance since the previous report, Mr. Callan said:

"Although performance in the maintenance area remained strong, several significant performance exceptions posed the potential for common-mode failures at the facility and impacted safety-system performance. Taken together, these exceptions were considered sufficient to warrant a decline in category rating."

But he said that overall performance in the plant support area remained superior with continued progress apparent in reducing occupational radiation exposures.

In conclusion, Mr. Callan wrote, "The self-assessments conducted by quality, line and corporate organizations improved and played a significant role in the overall strong performance at the ANO facility."

Editors: A copy of the full SALP report is available from this office on request. It also will be available in electronic format on the NRC Office of Public Affairs Internet home page at <http://www.nrc.gov/OPA>.