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NRC FINDS PERFORMANCE 'ACCEPTABLE' AT FORT CALHOUN IN LATEST REVIEW

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has found that safety performance remains acceptable in the NRC's latest plant performance review at Fort Calhoun Nuclear Plant located in Fort Calhoun, Nebraska.

Officials of NRC and Omaha Public Power District (OPPD), the utility which operates the plant, will discuss the review during a meeting set for Monday, April 19, at 2 p.m. in the Fort Calhoun Training Building Auditorium. 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.

In a letter to OPPD Division Manager for Nuclear Operations S. K. Gambhir NRC Branch Chief David N. Graves said, "Overall, performance at the Fort Calhoun Station was acceptable. Performance in the operations area showed an improving trend. Maintenance and engineering performance continued to be effective, with no programmatic issues identified. Plant support performance was characterized by good programs and implementation, but an increase in negative findings in the area of radiation protection indicated a potential negative trend." Only core inspections will be performed in all areas during the next eight months.

The text of the plant performance review letter is available from the NRC Region IV Office of Public Affairs and the NRC web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/OPA/ppr>.

NRC reviews safety performance twice a year at every licensed nuclear power plant in the nation. These reviews give the agency staff an integrated assessment of plant performance and provide a basis for planning inspection activities.

Plant performance reviews are an interim measure NRC is utilizing to monitor nuclear power plant safety. The agency began using it for this purpose after suspending the Systematic Assessment of License Performance (SALP) process until a new assessment program is developed. Previously, SALP reports were issued every 12 to 24 months.

The new reactor oversight and assessment program being developed will provide quarterly performance reports, based on a number of performance indicators and on inspection findings. This program will be tested at eight plants beginning in June and, if found acceptable, will be extended to all plants next January. A full description of the new program is available on the NRC web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/OPA/primer.htm>.

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