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Region III Office of Public Affairs  
801 Warrenville Road, Lisle, IL 60532-4351

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CONTACT: Jan Strasma 630/829-9663  
Angela Greenman 630/829-9662  
E-mail: opa3@nrc.gov

NRC STAFF FINDS SUFFICIENT IMPROVEMENTS FOR RESTART  
OF UNIT 1 OF THE LASALLE NUCLEAR POWER STATION

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has determined that Commonwealth Edison Company has made sufficient improvements at Unit 1 of the LaSalle Nuclear Power Station for the unit to resume operations. The two-reactor facility is located near Seneca, Illinois.

The utility is planning to begin startup of the unit next week.

Both units were shut down in September 1996 for refueling and maintenance and remained shut down for extensive plant modifications, staff retraining, and other performance improvement initiatives.

The NRC staff and utility officials met today to review the readiness of Unit 1 to resume operations. The utility has focused its efforts on Unit 1, and Unit 2 will remain shut down for similar plant modifications and improvements.

In April of last year, the NRC staff issued a Confirmatory Action Letter to the company, documenting its agreement to develop a performance improvement plan and to meet with the NRC staff periodically to review plant status. Today's meeting was the final meeting of that review process.

The NRC has performed extensive inspections at the LaSalle plant, including a review by a 10-person team of the readiness of Unit 1 for restart. This review was completed Tuesday and, along with other recent inspections, provided the basis for the NRC's conclusion that the plant was ready for restart.

The NRC will increase its inspection oversight of the plant during the startup process, including round-the-clock monitoring of control room activities for the first few days of operation. Work on Unit 2 will also be monitored closely.

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