

RIV: 96-31
RELEASE
CONTACT: Breck Henderson
OFFICE: 817/860-8128

FOR IMMEDIATE

May 13, 1996

SOUTH TEXAS RATED 'SUPERIOR' IN TWO AREAS
'GOOD' IN TWO IN LATEST NRC SYSTEMATIC ASSESSMENT REPORT

South Texas Project Electric Generating Station has received an evaluation of "superior" in two functional areas and "good" in two others in the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's latest Systematic Assessment of Licensee Performance (SALP) report.

The report was sent May 1 to Houston Lighting & Power Co. (HL&P), which operates the plant near Bay City, Texas. It evaluates the plant's performance between Sept. 25, 1994 and March 23 of this year.

NRC and HL&P officials will discuss the report during a meeting set for 2 p.m., May 16, in the Nuclear Support Center Auditorium at the South Texas Project. The meeting will be open for public observation. NRC officials will be available afterward 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 assign ratings of Category 1, 2, or 3 which characterize performance as superior, good or adequate. The report on South Texas Project assigns ratings of "Category 1" in maintenance and plant support. "Category 2" ratings were assigned to operations and engineering.

In his cover letter to the report, NRC Regional Administrator L. Joe Callan said, "Overall, safety performance improvements were noted in all four functional areas." In the maintenance area, safety performance improved from a good level to a superior level based on the improved material condition of the plant, facility upgrades, and the resolution of many long-standing equipment problems. In plant support, the areas of emergency preparedness and security were significantly improved, while the radiological controls program remained strong.

Engineering safety performance improved; however, weaknesses were noted with plant modifications and other engineering work

activities. South Texas Project improved its operations safety performance by reducing significant operator errors and enhancing procedures and programs. However, a number of operator performance weaknesses, of which several involved supervisors, occurred during the latter part of the SALP period.

Mr. Callan noted that, ". . . a key element of your overall improved safety performance was the implementation of self-critical, integrated, and continual line and independent self-assessment activities in all four functional areas. Initiatives to further enhance human and hardware performance must continue to be effective in order to sustain the overall improving safety performance trend that was noted during this SALP period."

-30-

EDITORS: A copy of the full SALP report is available from this office on request.