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POINT BEACH NUCLEAR PLANT RATED 'GOOD' IN THREE AREAS AND
'SUPERIOR' IN A FOURTH AREA IN LATEST NRC ASSESSMENT REPORT

The Point Beach Nuclear Power Station has received performance ratings of "superior" in plant support and "good" in operations, maintenance, and engineering in the Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff's latest Systematic Assessment of Licensee Performance (SALP) report for the facility.

The SALP report was issued to Wisconsin Electric Power Co., which operates the facility near Two Rivers, Wisconsin. It evaluates the plant's performance from September 18, 1994, through April 27 of this year.

The NRC staff and Wisconsin Electric officials will discuss the assessment during a meeting at 2 p.m., July 10, in the Two Creeks Town Hall located at State Highway 42 and Tapawingo Road north of Two Rivers, Wisconsin. The meeting is open to public observation.

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 depending on whether their performance in those areas was superior, good or adequate. The report on Point Beach gives a "Category 1" rating in plant support, indicating superior performance. It assigns a "Category 2" rating in operations, maintenance, and engineering, indicating good performance.

NRC Regional Administrator Hubert J. Miller, in a letter to the utility, said: "It is my view that the overall conduct of nuclear activities at Point Beach was good. However, improvements noted in some key areas were counterbalanced by emerging weaknesses, including concerns regarding the technical rigor and questioning attitude of your staff in the operations and engineering areas."

He noted improvements had been seen in operator conduct, control room professionalism, and work control, areas that were noted as weaknesses in the previous SALP report.

Mr. Miller observed that a number of equipment condition issues had been found by NRC inspectors during the assessment period and that correction of these issues was slow.

"While reliability and availability of safety-related equipment may not yet be affected, materiel condition deficiencies are often a precursor to future performance problems," he said.

"Overall performance in plant support was excellent," he continued. He cited strengths in the radiation protection program and the chemistry program as well as improvements in the security program. Early in the assessment period, the emergency preparedness program was excellent, but performance declined due to inadequate staffing, he added.

The ratings for each functional area of this report and the previous report were:

| <u>Functional Area</u> | <u>Current Period</u> | <u>Previous Period</u> |
|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Operations | 2 | 2 |
| Maintenance | 2 | 2 |
| Engineering | 2 | 2 |
| Plant Support | 1 | 1 |

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NOTE: A copy of the full report may be obtained from the Region III Office of Public Affairs at the telephone numbers or e-mail address above.

SALP reports are now available on the internet at: <<http://www.nrc.gov/OPA>>. Reports for all plants in the U.S. may be obtained when they are issued through an internet e-mail subscription. Send an e-mail addressed to listproc@nrc.gov with the following message: subscribe salp yourfirstname yourlastname.