



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, REGION III

801 Warrenville Road

Lisle IL 60532

Web Site: <http://www.nrc.gov>

No. III-02-023

April 30, 2002

CONTACT: Jan Strasma (630) 829-9663
Viktoria Mitlyng (630) 829-9662

E-mail: opa3@nrc.gov

NRC ESTABLISHES AGENCY OVERSIGHT PANEL FOR DAVIS-BESSE REACTOR HEAD DEGRADATION ISSUE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has established a special oversight panel to coordinate the agency's activities in assessing the performance problems associated with the corrosion damage to the reactor vessel head at the Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Plant, monitoring corrective actions, and evaluating the readiness of the plant to resume operations.

The plant, operated by FirstEnergy Nuclear Operating Company, is located near Oak Harbor, Ohio. It has been shut down since mid-February for refueling and maintenance. While repairing cracks in control rod tubes which penetrate the reactor vessel head, plant personnel discovered significant corrosion damage to the vessel head. NRC's documents on the Davis-Besse inspection are posted on the NRC's web site at:

<http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/operating/ops-experience/vessel-head-degradation.html>

The oversight panel will include NRC management personnel and staff from the Region III office in Lisle, Illinois, the NRC Headquarters office in Rockville, Maryland, and the NRC Resident Inspector Office at the Davis-Besse site. John Grobe, Director of the Region III Division of Reactor Safety, will chair the panel. The panel will coordinate the NRC's regulatory activities in response to the Davis-Besse reactor vessel head corrosion. The plant will not restart until the NRC is satisfied that all current safety concerns have been resolved.

The panel will hold public meetings periodically with FirstEnergy representatives to review the status of activities associated with the corrosion damage. These meetings will normally be held in the vicinity of the Davis-Besse plant.

The oversight activities will be conducted under the agency's Inspection Manual Chapter 0350, which establishes the procedures to be followed for the oversight of utility performance for plants that are shut down as a result of significant performance problems or events.

###