



NRC NEWS

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CONTACT: Ken Clark (404)562-4416
Roger Hannah (404)562-4417

E-mail: OPA2@nrc.gov

NRC TO DISCUSS 2007 PERFORMANCE OF OCONEE NUCLEAR STATION

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has scheduled a meeting for Thursday, April 10, with representatives of Duke Energy to discuss the agency's assessment of safety performance during 2007 at the Oconee Nuclear Station. The plant, operated by Duke Energy, is 30 miles west of Greenville, S.C., near the town of Seneca.

The meeting, which will be open to the public, is scheduled to begin at 10:00 a.m. in the Oconee World of Energy, 7812 Rochester Highway in Seneca.

After the formal presentation, NRC staff will be available to answer questions from the public on the safety performance of Oconee, as well as the NRC's role in ensuring safe plant operation.

"The NRC continually inspects and reviews the performance of Oconee and all commercial nuclear plants, issuing inspection reports throughout the year and an overall assessment at year's end," NRC Region II Administrator Victor McCree said. "This meeting is an opportunity to discuss that annual assessment with the company, local officials and people near the plant, and to answer any questions they may have."

The NRC said the Oconee plant operated safely during the 2007 assessment period, from Jan. 1 through Dec. 31. Oconee plant performance during the first two quarters of 2007 was in the Degraded Cornerstone Column of the NRC's Action Matrix based on a "white" performance indicator and "white" inspection findings in the Mitigating Systems cornerstone.

When assessing nuclear plant performance, the NRC uses color-coded performance indicators and inspection findings. The colors start with "green" and then increase to "white," "yellow" or "red," commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved. An NRC inspection in 2007 closed the "white" items at Oconee and as a result, the plant moved into the Licensee Response Column and the NRC plans to conduct routine baseline inspections at the plant during 2008.

A letter sent from the NRC Region II office to plant officials addresses the performance of the plant during 2007 and will serve as the basis for the meeting discussion. It is available on the NRC web site at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/oco_2007q4.pdf.

Current performance information for the three Oconee units is available on the NRC web site at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/OCO1/oco1_chart.html ; www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/OCO2/oco2_chart.html ; and www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/OCO3/oco3_chart.html .

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