



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC TO DISCUSS OYSTER CREEK NUCLEAR PLANT ANNUAL ASSESSMENT AT PUBLIC MEETING SET FOR MAY 15 IN TOMS RIVER, N.J.

The results of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's annual safety performance assessment for the Oyster Creek nuclear power plant will be the subject of a public meeting on Thursday, May 15. Oyster Creek, a boiling-water reactor, is located in Lacey Township (Ocean County), N.J., and operated by AmerGen Energy Co., LLC.

At 7 p.m., NRC staff will meet with representatives of AmerGen to discuss the assessment, which covers the period from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2007, and was documented in a March 3rd letter to the company. The meeting will take place at the Oyster Creek Emergency Operating Facility, at 1268 Route 37 West in Toms River, N.J. The NRC staff will also conduct an informational poster-board session for interested members of the public in conjunction with the meeting. That session will begin at 5:30 p.m. at the same location.

Prior to the conclusion of the meeting, NRC staff will be available to answer questions from the public on the plant's performance during 2007, as well as the agency's oversight of the facility.

"Through a combination of inspection findings and performance indicators, we are able to develop a comprehensive picture of how nuclear power plants are performing with regard to safety," said NRC Region I Administrator Samuel J. Collins. "As part of our commitment to make the findings of our reviews accessible to the public, we hold meetings near each plant once a year to share the details of those assessments. We look forward to the opportunity on May 15th to present that information for the Oyster Creek nuclear power plant."

The annual assessment letter for Oyster Creek is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/oc_2007q4.pdf. The notice for the meeting, with agenda attached, is available in the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) under accession number ML081160259. The slides for the meeting can be found under accession number ML081060600. ADAMS is accessible at:

<http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html> . Help in using ADAMS is available via the NRC's Public Document Room at 1-800-397-4209 or 301-415-4737, or by e-mail at PDR@NRC.GOV .

Overall, Oyster Creek operated safely during 2007. When considering nuclear power 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.

At the conclusion of last year, there were no performance indicators for Oyster Creek that were other than "green" and no inspection findings that were "greater than green." Therefore, the plant will receive the baseline, or routine, level of inspections for the remainder of 2008.

Oyster Creek did have a single "white" (low to moderate safety significance) inspection finding open during the first two quarters of 2007. That finding involved Oyster Creek staff not recognizing that plant parameters met emergency action level thresholds during an event in August 2005. In response to the finding, the NRC conducted a supplemental inspection at the facility in May 2006 to assess whether the necessary steps had been taken by AmerGen to address the underlying causes and prevent a recurrence. Because the NRC was not satisfied with the progress of the company's corrective actions at that point, another supplemental inspection was deemed necessary. That second supplemental inspection was carried out in July 2007. Based on the results of that review, the NRC determined the actions were appropriate and, consequently, the finding was closed out.

Inspections are carried out by the two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the agency's Region I Office in King of Prussia, Pa. Among the areas of performance at Oyster Creek to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are activities associated with radiological safety, fire protection, problem identification and resolution, and emergency preparedness. In addition, the NRC will conduct inspections related to the plant's dry cask storage facility for spent nuclear fuel.

Current performance information for Oyster Creek is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/OC/oc_chart.html .

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