



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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Site: www.nrc.gov
Blog: <http://public-blog.nrc-gateway.gov>

No: II-11-037

May 18, 2011

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NRC SCHEDULES PUBLIC MEETING FOR MAY 31 TO DISCUSS PERFORMANCE OF BROWNS FERRY NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has scheduled a meeting for Tuesday, May 31, to discuss the agency's assessment of safety performance during 2010 at the Browns Ferry nuclear power plant. The plant, operated by the Tennessee Valley Authority, is in Athens, Ala., about 32 miles west of Huntsville.

The meeting will begin at 1 p.m. CDT with a presentation on the safety performance of the Browns Ferry plant during 2010, as well as a brief discussion of the NRC's oversight and inspection program. After the presentation, there will be a question and answer session. The meeting will be in the Browns Ferry Training Center Auditorium at the plant site, located at 10833 Shaw Road in Athens.

"The NRC evaluates nuclear power plants in a systematic and detailed way every year," NRC Region II Administrator Victor McCree said. "The inspections and oversight at Browns Ferry ensure that the plant is operated in a way that protects people and the environment."

A letter sent from the NRC Region II office to plant officials addresses the performance of the plant during 2010 and will serve as the basis for the meeting discussion. It is available on the NRC website at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/bf_2010q4.pdf.

The NRC found that the Browns Ferry plant overall operated safely during 2010. However, plant performance for all three units required additional NRC oversight during the most recent quarter of the 2010 assessment period. In October, the NRC successfully completed a supplemental inspection and closed two violations, one of substantial safety significance ("yellow") and the other of low to moderate significance ("white").

Also in October, an issue with a failed low pressure coolant injection valve in Unit 1 was identified. The valve was repaired prior to placing the plant back into operation. At the end of the 2010 performance period, the NRC had not determined the final safety significance of the issue. It has recently been designated as "red," or having high safety significance, and will result in significantly increased NRC oversight, including a comprehensive inspection of the issues surrounding that valve failure. These inspections will be conducted after TVA takes additional corrective actions.

In addition, the NRC continues to have a concern with the plant's progress in addressing the area of problem identification and resolution. TVA has entered the issue in its corrective action program and the NRC will continue to monitor the plant's progress.

During 2010, the NRC also identified an issue in the area of human performance and error prevention. TVA has completed a root cause analysis and is implementing a range of actions to address the concerns. The NRC staff will continue to monitor efforts and progress in that area.

The NRC uses color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to assess plant performance. The colors start with "green," which has very low safety significance, to "white," "yellow" or "red," based on the significance of the issues. Inspection findings and performance indicators are updated on the NRC's website (www.nrc.gov) each quarter.

Current performance information for the three Browns Ferry units is available on the NRC website at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/BF1/bf1_chart.html and www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/BF2/bf2_chart.html and www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/BF3/bf3_chart.html.

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