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NRC to Hold Open House on July 21 for Columbia Generating Station

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will hold a public open house on July 21, in Richland, Wash., to discuss the agency's annual review of safety performance at the Columbia Generating Station nuclear power plant. The plant is operated by Energy Northwest.

NRC staff will be on hand from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Richland Public Library Gallery at 955 Northgate Drive in Richland. There are no formal presentations during the open house, which will provide an opportunity for the public to ask about NRC's assessment of the plant's performance in 2014 and the agency's oversight plans for 2015. Among the NRC staff in attendance will be the Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant on a full-time basis.

NRC gauges plant performance through the use of inspection findings and other indicators that can trigger additional oversight if needed. Overall, the plant operated safely in 2014 and the plant is currently under the NRC's normal level of oversight.

"By assessing each plant's performance in a comprehensive manner, we are able to focus our inspection resources on those areas most in need of attention," NRC Region IV Administrator Marc Dapas said. "Because Columbia Generating Station did not have any safety or security issues rising above very low significance in 2014, we are not currently planning any inspections above and beyond our normal reviews."

The NRC's normal level of oversight at each U.S. nuclear power plant involves thousands of hours of inspection. In 2014, the agency devoted about 6,000 hours of inspection and review at Columbia.

A letter sent from the NRC Region IV office to plant officials addresses the performance of the plant during 2014. Current performance information for the plant can be found on the NRC website.