September 1, 2010

Brian J. O'Grady, Vice President-Nuclear
and Chief Nuclear Officer
Nebraska Public Power – Cooper
Nuclear Station
72676 648A Avenue
Brownville, NE 68321

SUBJECT: MIDCYCLE PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND INSPECTION PLAN – COOPER NUCLEAR STATION

Dear Mr. O'Grady:

On August 11, 2010, the NRC staff completed its performance review of Cooper Nuclear Station. Our technical staff reviewed performance indicators (PIs) for the most recent quarter and inspection results for the period from July 1, 2009, through June 30, 2010. The purpose of this letter is to inform you of our assessment of your safety performance during this period and our plans for future inspections at your facility.

This performance review and enclosed inspection plan do not include security information. A separate letter designated and marked as "Official Use Only—Security-Related Information" will include the security cornerstone review and resultant inspection plan.

Plant performance for the most recent quarter at Cooper Nuclear Station was within the Licensee Response column of the NRC's Action Matrix, based on all inspection findings being classified as having very low safety significance (Green) and all PIs indicating performance at a level requiring no additional NRC oversight (Green). Therefore, we plan to conduct reactor oversight process (ROP) baseline inspections at your facility.

In our annual performance assessment letter, dated March 3, 2010, a substantive crosscutting issue in the area of human performance was identified based on a number of findings associated with the work practices component of the human performance area, specifically related to the use of human error prevention techniques [H.4(a)]. This crosscutting theme was also discussed during the 2008 end-of-cycle and the 2009 midcycle assessment letters. In the 2009 end-of-cycle letter, we informed you that this issue would remain open until you demonstrated sustainable performance improvements as evidenced by effective implementation of an appropriate corrective action plan that results in no safety significant inspection findings and a notable reduction in the overall number of inspection findings.
During this current assessment period, we noted that your corrective actions have been somewhat effective as evidenced by identification of only one additional finding with this crosscutting theme. We also recognized that you have not completed all actions documented in your improvement plan. Your improvement plan contains both tactical and strategic actions. The tactical actions were designed to immediately address specific challenges that were known to impact employee performance. The strategic actions were developed to address organizational and programmatic challenges. Most of your tactical actions have been fully implemented. However, the strategic actions which were specifically designed to sustain your noted improvement have not been fully implemented. Since not all actions are completed, this crosscutting issue will remain open pending completion and implementation of all correction actions to address this issue. This will also allow time to evaluate the sustainability of your performance improvement efforts once they are fully implemented. We will follow your progress in addressing this issue through implementation of the baseline inspection program.

The enclosed inspection plan details the inspections, less those related to physical protection scheduled through December 31, 2011. The inspection plan is provided to allow for the resolution of any scheduling conflicts and personnel availability issues well in advance of inspector arrival onsite. Routine resident inspections are not listed due to their ongoing and continuous nature. The inspections in the last nine months of the inspection plan are tentative and may be revised at the end-of-cycle review.

In accordance with 10 CFR 2.390 of the NRC’s “Rules of Practice,” a copy of this letter and its enclosure will be made available electronically for public inspection in the NRC Public Document Room or from the Publicly Available Records (PARS) component of NRC’s document system (ADAMS). ADAMS is accessible from the NRC Web site at http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html (the Public Electronic Reading Room).

If circumstances arise which cause us to change the inspection plan, we will contact you to discuss the change as soon as possible. Please contact Vincent Gaddy at 817-860-8144 with any questions you may have regarding this letter or the inspection plan.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Anton Vegel, Acting Director
Division of Reactor Projects

Docket: 50-298
License: DPR-46

Enclosure:
Cooper Nuclear Station Inspection/Activity Plan
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