NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
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611 Ryan Plaza Drive - Suite 400
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No. IV-03-005 March 14, 2003
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NRC TO MEET WITH ARIZONA PUBLIC SERVICE TO DISCUSS PERFORMANCE OF PALO VERDE NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of Arizona Public Service Co., on Wednesday, March 19, to discuss the results of the agency's annual assessment of safety performance at the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station. The facility is located near Wintersburg, AZ, and operated by Arizona Public Service Co.

The meeting, which will be open to the public for observation, is scheduled to begin at 7:00 p.m. at the Estrella Mountain Community College, Community Room, 2nd Floor of Estrella Hall, 3000 North Dysart Road, Avondale, AZ. Before the session is adjourned, NRC staff will be available to answer questions from the public on the safety performance of the plant, as well as the role of the NRC in ensuring safe plant operation.

The performance period to be discussed is January 1 to December 31, 2002. In addition, NRC staff will provide an overview of how the agency's Reactor Oversight Process works.

A letter sent from the NRC Region IV Office to Arizona Public Service Co. addresses the performance of the plant during the period and will serve as the basis for the meeting discussion. It is available on the NRC web site at:
http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/palo_2002q4.pdf

"Overall, Palo Verde operated in a manner that preserved public health and safety and fully met all cornerstone objectives," the letter says. Therefore, the NRC plans to conduct only baseline inspections at the site through March 31, 2004, although some additional inspections are planned in conjunction with steam generator replacement activities at Palo Verde Unit 2.

In addition, the letter notes: "As you are aware, since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the NRC has issued several Orders and threat advisories to enhance security capabilities and improve guard force readiness. We have conducted inspections to review your implementation of these requirements and have monitored your actions in response to changing threat advisories. For calendar Year 2002, we plan to continue these inspections and conduct portions of the security baseline inspection program, as well as perform additional inspections to evaluate your compliance with new requirements that may be ordered."

Current performance information for Palo Verde Unit 1 is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/PALO1/palo1_chart.html. Unit 2 information is at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/PALO2/palo2_chart.html. Unit 3 is at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/PALO3/palo3_chart.html.

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