March 23, 2006

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-IV-06-002

This preliminary notification constitutes EARLY notice of events of POSSIBLE safety or public interest significance. The information is as initially received without verification or evaluation, and is basically all that is known by the Region IV staff on this date.

Facility	Licensee Emergency Classification
South Texas Project Nuclear Operating Company	___ Notification of Unusual Event
South Texas Project Unit 1	___ Alert
Docket: 50-498 License No. NPF-76	___ Site Area Emergency
	___ General Emergency
	_X_ Not Applicable

SUBJECT: FIRE AFFECTING NON SAFETY-RELATED EQUIPMENT LOCATED IN A SAFETY-RELATED ROOM

DESCRIPTION: Early in the morning of March 23, a small fire was identified and extinguished in one of the electrical switchgear rooms of South Texas Project, Unit 1. There were some impacts from the temporary loss of power to the integrated computer system. However, the functionality of the unit's safety-related equipment was unaffected.

Specifically, at 12:39 a.m. (CST) on March 23, fire alarms associated with the B safety-related switchgear room actuated in the Unit 1 control room. Operators and the fire brigade leader were dispatched to investigate. Light smoke was identified coming from an inverter cabinet located approximately 3 to 4 feet from the nearest safety-related equipment in the room. This non-safety related inverter supplies power to the unit's integrated computer system. At 12:45 a.m. (CST), the cabinet was opened and small flames were identified coming from a transformer located at the bottom of the cabinet. The fire was extinguished by the station fire brigade and was declared out at 12:57 a.m. (CST).

Because of the loss of this inverter power supply, approximately 20 percent of the control room alarm annunciators were affected. These were primarily room area temperature alarms associated with various electrical switchgear and pump rooms. Control room operators entered the off-normal procedure for a partial loss of annunciators and initiated compensatory measures. The operators also entered the off-normal procedure for fire response.

In response, the licensee bypassed the damaged inverter and re-energized the associated electrical bus from an alternate power supply. The integrated computer system was returned to service and all affected annunciators were restored to normal. The plant continued to operate at full power throughout the event.

The licensee is currently assessing the situation and developing plans to make repairs. The NRC Resident Inspectors are onsite following up on the actions taken by the licensee.

The state of Texas will be informed.

Region IV received notification of this occurrence from the licensee to the Resident Inspector at approximately 2:00 a.m. (CST) on March 23, 2006.

This information has been discussed with the licensee and is current as of 2:00 p.m. (CST) on March 23, 2006.

Accession Nbr: ML060820567

CONTACTS: Claude E. Johnson, Chief
Project Branch A
Division of Reactor Projects
817-860-8148
CEJ1@NRC.GOV

Frank Brush
Senior Resident Inspector
South Texas Project
361-972-2507
FLB2@NRC.GOV