UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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PUBLIC MEETING

Salon A
Wyndham Garden Hotel
111 Miracle Hills Drive
Omaha, Nebraska

Wednesday, December 1, 2000

P R O C E E D I N G S

[7:00 p.m.]

MR. SPECTOR: My name is August Spector, and this is the roundtable discussion related to the oversight process, and just before we start, what I'd like to know, is there anybody here that received a letter from us requesting that they sit at the roundtable?

[No response.]

MR. SPECTOR: I'd like to introduce Al Madison, who will tell us about the program.

Al?

MR. MADISON: Good evening, and welcome.

I'm Alan Madison. I'm the Transition Task Force Leader for the Revised Reactor Oversight Process, which means that I'm the fellow out of Headquarters that doesn't necessarily deal directly with the plant but has been charged with the responsibility of overseeing the development and the trial and implementation of the new process that we're going to discuss this evening.

First of all, let me talk a little bit about what we're going to cover.

I want to give kind of a high-level discussion about who we are -- in other words, who the NRC is, because we've found in past public meetings that that is -- that's a benefit to both you and the members of the -- and us as an agency, that we explain to -- for your benefit who we are and what we do.

I'm going to give a brief overview of the revised program, and I mean brief, about minutes. It's going to be at about the ,-foot level.

So, it's not intended to give a lesson on how the process works or the details of the process, and that was one of the reasons why we sent the information in advance to the folks that we had asked to participate in this, so they could have time to review it and come to the table with somewhat of an educated background to be able to discuss it properly.

Then we'll get into the meat of the meeting, the roundtable discussion, and Auggie will kind of explain the ground rules of how we're going to go about doing that, but I also want to emphasize we will be asking for input and be soliciting input from those members of the audience that would like to participate.

Any questions before I begin?

[No response.]

MR. MADISON: Okay.

Who we are: We are the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and I'm surprised to find out how many people actually don't even know who the Nuclear Regulatory Commission are.

We're the Government agency, the Federal Government agency that's charged with the protection of the public health and safety, ensuring the public health and safety during the operation and the use of nuclear materials, and specifically for purposes of this meeting, the operation of commercial nuclear power plants.

What do we do and how do we ensure that?

Some of the elements of our activities are to ensure that nuclear plants are designed and constructed and operated in a safe manner overall.

We license the plants. We provide the technical basis for their continued operation. We, as I said, issue the license. We ensure, then, the licensees use the nuclear materials and operate the plant safely, and we do that primarily through inspection.

So, what I would also like to start off with is we have several members of the NRC, the local Nuclear Regulatory Commission representatives, present. I'd like them to take this time now to stand, introduce themselves, and explain their connection to the Fort Calhoun nuclear station.

Charlie, do you want to start off?

MR. MARSCHALL: I'm Charles Marschall. I'm the Branch Chief out of Arlington, Texas, which is our Region IV office, with responsibility for the administration of the inspection program at Fort Calhoun and Cooper, which is down in the Auburn, Nebraska, area.

Wayne Walker is one of our resident inspectors. We typically have resident inspectors, two, typically, at each site in the United States, and at the moment, we have one at Fort Calhoun, while we're in transition, expecting a second one to arrive right after the first of the year.

Wayne?

MR. WALKER: I am Wayne Walker, as Charlie mentioned. My role there at the plant is to be there each day as a resident inspector and also for emergency response, in case there's any type of emergency at the plant, and I implement the inspection process and procedures there on a daily basis.

MR. BROCKMAN: Good evening. I'm Ken Brockman. I'm the Director for the Division of Reactor Projects in Region IV, and my division implements the inspection program at all of the sites in Region IV, that being of them.

MR. LOVELESS: I'm David Loveless. I'm a Senior Project Engineer out of Region IV. My job is to help facilitate and coordinate the activities for the resident inspectors at the Fort Calhoun station.

MR. SLOAN: I'm Jim Sloan, a Senior Resident Inspector at San Onofre nuclear plant in southern California. I'm here this week just getting some experience

with the implementation of the program at Fort Calhoun.

MR. HENDERSON: I'm Breck Henderson. I'm the Public Affairs Officer from Region IV, and I issue press releases and help deal with the media concerning nuclear power.

MR. JONES: My name is Bill Jones. I'm a Senior Reactor Analyst in the Region IV office in Arlington, Texas. I'm responsible for reviewing risk insights and ensuring risk insights are applied to the inspection process and assessment of each of our nuclear power plants in the Region IV area.

MR. MADISON: All right.

That kind of describes a little bit of what we see as our function, our job, and some of the people that actually do that job.

Here's how we measure ourselves, what we're calling our four key outcome measures that we've established as an agency to ensure that we're doing the job that we say we're going to do.

We see these as the key outcome measures.

Maintenance of safety -- and I'm going to focus on a couple of the reasons why we're saying the words that we're saying in there.

Maintenance of safety -- we're not looking at necessarily increasing or improving but maintaining current safe operation of the facilities in the country.

Enhancing public confidence -- we see that there's a need for improvement, and that's one of the reasons why we're here today.

When we first began the pilot program, we went out to all the pilot plant locations, we held public meetings to describe the process to the public.

We've held several public workshops, but we feel that there's still a need to reach out to the public to try to incorporate that aspect of that stakeholder into the process, and what do I mean by stakeholder?

Stakeholder is the term that's bandied about, but it's basically -- it's that group of people who have identity, that has a stake in the safe operation of the nuclear power plant. That means everybody, right? Yes, it does, but we've sectioned it kind of into groups.

So, we would look at the industry as being one group, we would look at -- we as the regulator are stakeholders, our people are stakeholders in the process, we see Congress as one of the stakeholders, and we see the public as broken into various groups, as well.

During our general outreach, we've tried to reach out to all members of the public. We've also tried to focus on the press as one representative of the public. We've also invited public interest groups such as the Union of Concerned Scientists and Public Citizen to participate in the development of the process.

In fact, Representative Dave Lockbaum from the Union of Concerned Scientists is on the -- what we call the pilot program evaluation panel. He's actually a member of that and will participate in developing an independent report on the success or failure of the pilot program.

The other segment of the public that we wanted to focus on and why we're here this evening is the local public, those folks that live right around the plant, and we see some of their representatives, some of the people we invited this evening to participate.

Third is improving the effectiveness and efficiency and the realism of the process, and that's kind of one of the reasons why we're here tonight, as well, to see how well we've done, what the opinion of the local members of the public is and how well we've done in designing the process to achieve this goal, and reducing unnecessary regulatory burden, and again, key word there is "unnecessary."

We are a regulator. We recognize and I think licensees recognize we will be a burden, but if we can reduce the unnecessary regulatory burden, we can reduce the resources that we need to maintain safety and reduce the cost to the public of the program.

All right.

Next I want to talk a little bit about -- kind of contrast our old program with the new program, and basically, our current program, what we call the old program, is not really one program. It's a collection of processes that have been developed over time. It's kind of like accretion with an iceberg.

We had a process, we had a basic process probably years ago, years ago, and we've added to that process over time, as the need has arisen.

The time was right now, we felt, to take a look at the basis for all those programs and try to redesign it and come up with one clear program.

The current program or the old program is based only on inspection. The only input to the program other than enforcement is inspection, and it's very strict compliance-oriented, what we would call deterministic view. We determined that there was a need for a body of regulations in times past and the inspection ensures the licensees' compliance with that body of regulation.

Again, enforcement as part of that is -- how we perceive their compliance is a major input to any assessment.

Our new process -- and I didn't mention that some of the elements of the old process were considered to be the

SALP, the Systematic Assessment of Licensee Performance, the PPR process, Plant Performance Reviews, and various other aspects of the program, but it was just a collection of processes.

The new process is a single process, and it's described -- a logic framework developed around key areas that we consider are most important to ensure adequate protection of the public health and safety.

We feel it provides for a collection of essential information in key areas that we've identified. We developed what we consider a top-down process, where we looked at what is the goal and objective of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. I think that was one of our first slides. It's to ensure the public health and safety.

Based upon that, what areas should we be concerned about?

We identified key strategic areas, and then, beyond that, we identified what it takes to ensure that those key strategic areas, the goals and objectives within those key strategic areas, are met, and those are what we call the cornerstones of safety, and we based our process and the inspection program around those cornerstones of safety.

We've tried to develop within this process objectives, standards, and clear criteria. One of the criticisms we've had in the old process is we were kind of the black box of regulation. There was a lot of information we gathered, but we didn't have a clear criterion and clear standard so that the public and the licensee could figure out where were coming from and why we were taking the actions we did.

So, one of goals and objectives with this process was to establish those clear criteria and those clear objectives so that we were more objective, scrutable, predictable, and transparent in our operations.

One of the things we want to emphasize, however, is continued emphasis is on safety. We still have strict standards. We still have daily monitoring of the activities out at the site. That's why we have the resident inspectors. That's why we have regional inspectors and headquarters inspectors going into the sites periodically.

But we feel that we have clear, consistent objectives now, and they're focused more on the safety aspects.

The old program, as I mentioned, was more of an accretion-type setup. We thought things were important, we'd inspect them. So, we kept adding inspection activities, a more bottom-up process.

This is more looking at what are we trying to achieve and what's the most efficient and effective way of achieving it?

One of the things we hope to gain from this process is that, because the activities are more clear and more consistent, that the results are easier for the public to understand, and one of the things we'll talk about today is some of the activities we've tried to accomplish to make the process easier to understand.

One of the things I do try to mention -- and you'll see it a couple of times -- is enforcement is now not an input to the process. Enforcement is an outcome, as it should be, in the process.

If there are issues, there are enforcement issues, violations of standards, enforcement will be an outcome, but it's not counted as necessarily a direct input.

Some of the key aspects of the new program -- I mentioned before that the old inspection activities were based upon looking at this body of requirements, making sure that the compliance activities -- that the licensee was complying with it, but also trying to find out why if there were problems, always trying -- even for minor issues -- trying to determine the root cause of the problems.

The focus now is more on indicative, looking for really safety focus issues. If the issue doesn't have a clear safety focus, we're not going to delve into it to find out the reason why.

We'll identify it for the licensee to correct, but unless it has a clear safety focus issue, we don't -- we don't feel it's an effective use of our resources to delve deeply into it.

So, we're looking for an indicative, an indication of problems such as performance indicators, which is the next bullet on this slide.

We've developed some numerical measurements and numerical indicators of performance in various areas. We see these also as just an indicator, not necessarily a direct measure, but an indicator of where problems are and where we might want to spend more time.

Focus on the line up here a little bit, baseline. What do we mean by baseline? That question came up today in this afternoon's public meeting.

The baseline program, as we've defined it, is the minimum inspection effort we feel necessary to ensure the goals and objectives of the cornerstones in the strategic performance areas are met at the best operating facility in the country.

So, it's the minimum inspection effort.

Anything above that, based upon the indicative program, we would call a supplemental type of inspection, a more reactive type of inspection, and that would be based upon some specific thresholds that we've established within

a program that tell us when we would do those extra inspections, when we would take those additional actions and also fit within an action matrix to ensure consistency across the country.

One of the other criticisms of the old program and the current program is inconsistent application from one region to the next.

The program, as laid out, is fairly simple. It tends to get complicated when you get into the details, but it's set up something like this.

We look at performance indicators. We use the inspection findings very similar to the performance indicators as indicative by using what we call the significance determination process to measure those. We put it into an action matrix and that determines what we do, the actions we take, and enforcement is strictly just an outcome of the process.

How do we go about doing that? What are the concepts behind it?

This is just a basic concept of what we're looking at. We recognize that there is a level of performance. This is an industrial process. People are going to have -- make mistakes. As long as the mistakes that they're dealing with do not challenge the safety of the facility beyond a certain reasonable level, that's okay. That's an

industrial operation. That's an acceptable level of degradation of performance.

At any facility, even in your car, your car is not going to perform quite as well between oil changes, towards the end of the oil change, but when it reaches the oil change time, now you expect the performance to be good. This is the same thing with a utility. We call it the utility response band.

As long as performance is operating within here, there's an acceptable level of performance, the margin to safety is still great enough that it's okay for the licensee to take action and not the NRC to worry about what the root cause of the problems are.

We define for the process that what was unsafe was down here. As long as operation doesn't achieve down below this level, the plants are operating safely, because we as an agency have decided that we're not going to allow for unsafe operation ever at any plant.

Then to assure ourselves of that, we back this up to this threshold, and the concept here is that we will -- that's an unacceptable level of performance, so that we will stop operation of the facility or the licensee will take action to stop operation, stop the performance, and correct it before they resume operation, before we ever get to the unsafe level.

Within this band, we have a couple of different levels where we can increase our engagement in the licensee, and I'll try to explain that very fast. This is, again, the ,-foot level. This is not a course you take this back and tell folks about later.

The concept here, though, as long as they're operating within this band, they're within nominal performance, the licensee is operating as we would expect them to operate within nominal performance.

When they cross this green-white threshold, that's the concern where we're saying, well, maybe they're outside of normal operation, maybe we need to get a little more information and look a little closer in some areas, and one of the areas we're going to focus on is the corrective action program.

The corrective action program, as we define, is the licensee's processes and programs and capability to identify and correct and resolve their own problems within a reasonable timeframe.

Within this band, we're assuming the corrective action program is working, because it's identifying their problems, it's correcting it before it degrades down to here.

When it slips below this threshold, now we want to verify that corrective action program is looking at the problems that have been identified, has identified them, and is coming up with a reasonable approach to correct the problems in a timely manner. If not, we need to take additional action.

When it slips to this level, there's an assumption that the corrective action program has some significant problems.

We may need to do an actual tandem verification of what the root cause of those problems are and verify that

the licensee's corrective actions that they plan to take are the right ones to correct the problems and turn them around in a timely manner.

At this point, we're demanding that the licensee take the appropriate action. We're probably deeply involved with orders, demands for information, to try to find out just exactly what's going to happen and why it hasn't happened already.

The concept, explained in another way, is that, with green issues, green performance indicators, or green inspection findings, the cornerstone objectives are fully met; the margin of safety is large enough and acceptable.

With white, the cornerstone objectives are still met, but there is a minimal reduction in the safety measure.

Yellow cornerstone, the objectives are still met, but there's a significant degradation in the safety margin,

and we and the licensee need to take action now to prevent it from reaching unacceptable performance where they're significantly outside the design basis.

What does the public see and what's the impact on the public, one of the reasons we're here?

As I mentioned earlier, we've held some public meetings to provide some direct information to the public. The performance indicator data and the inspection finding information are available on our web-site. I don't know how many folks here have actually taken a look at our web-site. I'm going to put that information up so you can take a look at it.

The information about inspection findings and about a performance indicator is readily available to the public. We also have what our interpretation of that information is on the web-site, readily available to the public.

The performance indicator information is supplied by the licensee to the agency on a quarterly basis, when the program is running forward.

Also, the inspection data information is updated on a quarterly basis.

So, every three months, new data is available, new information related to the operation of that facility is available for the public to review, as well as the periodic

reports are available.

If anybody is interested, this is the -- I'll give a chance for folks to take a look at that. I've drawn a little diagram of what you might see while you're on that web-site.

We have -- in addition to that information on the operation of individual facilities -- and right now, the information that's on that web-site is only associated with the pilot plants, the nine pilot plants that are participating in the pilot program.

There's a lot of information about the program. We've tried to include draft information on this web-site, because we want to get the whole process out before the public, so the public has a chance to participate in the development and in the comment period on this.

Speaking of comment periods, a Federal Register

notice was issued on the pilot program and the processes associated with it. It was originally scheduled to close yesterday. We extended that for one month. It is now due to close on the st of December.

We are soliciting comments on basically the nine questions we're going to ask this group this evening, and I would encourage anybody here, if they have comments, to please provide those public comments.

We have available on the web other ways you can send comments or questions to us, direct to me, to OPA, or to -- any of the other ways.

What else have we got on the web?

I guess you're on there, as well.

MR. SPECTOR: And we have another one which many people can access.

MR. MADISON: You can also contact your friendly local regional office, and they'll forward that to us.

Here's what you might see when you get on the web, something kind of like this.

These are the strategic performance areas I had mentioned, and these are what we're considering the cornerstones of safety. This goes into what we feel is necessary, what we need to be worried about within this reactor safety area as important strategic areas we need to monitor, and below that, then we would look at these performance indicators, as well as inspection findings, which will show on a different screen, associated with that particular cornerstone.

These are all colored green. We've got another one that has different colors on there. But the idea would be that, if you have a performance indicator that you're interested in, you could click on that box there.

That will take you to a diagram that will show you the exact performance of that performance indicator, what it looks like.

If you click on that diagram, associated with that diagram is the actual raw data that goes into making that performance indicator.

So, you can get as deeply involved in that process as you wish.

When you go to the boxes that are associated with the inspection findings and you click on that box, that's an example of a performance indicator that may show up, occupational exposure. You can see there is the data points associated with that report for that particular licensee.

We would expect to see some cycling within that green band.

What you would do if you go for the inspection findings, however, and you click on that box, it will take you to what we call our plant issues matrix, and that highlights the findings, the significant findings that the inspector found every time they write a report.

So, if there's a yellow block down there and you click on that yellow, it will take you right to that highlight on the plant issues matrix, and that should provide enough information, just from reading that, that you could recreate what we could a significance determination

process that tells you why we thought that was a significant finding.

If you click on that PIM entry, it will take you directly to the report, and you can get the details out of the report and provide more information for that.

Inspections with the new process -- I guess want to assure folks that inspections are going to continue.

They're different. The focus is different. We're hoping that what we've done -- taking a look at the processes, instead of focusing on everything, trying to focus on the key safety issues, the more important issues of the plant.

The baseline inspection provides for the continual monitoring even at the best performing plant. Supplemental inspections are used to then diagnose any specific concerns with either the performance indicators or the baseline inspection program as identified.

We will continue to have special inspection teams when necessary, for generic safety issues that are nationwide concerns or specific events that may identify concerns at a plant, and inspection reports are readily available and will continue to be readily available on the web-site.

I mentioned earlier that we have an ongoing pilot program. We began the program May th, and it actually ended yesterday, formally, but we will continue the process at the pilot plants, at least the process ongoing, so we can

continue to collect data on the program.

It was at nine sites on a national basis. We originally planned two sites per region, different operating performance levels at the plants, different reactor types, to try to really test the process.

We established some criteria up front to determine whether we were going to be successful with the program. We also established this Pilot Program Evaluation Panel to help do an independent look at the process.

We have representatives from the NRC on that panel, representatives from industry, we have a representative from the State of Illinois, David Lockbaum from the Union of Concerned Scientists. That pretty much covers who we've got on there.

And that group has also invited Jim Riccio from Public Citizen and some other public interest groups and the other states, New Jersey and other interested state participants, to provide information to their deliberations, and we've solicited public comment and feedback, just as we're doing today.

How are we going about some of the aspects of doing that?

As I mentioned earlier, we've had some initial public meetings out at the sites. We're going to do these roundtables.

We'll continue with the public workshops, and we have a bi-weekly public meeting with industry where we've invited the public and industry to help us work out the details of this program, help us come to grips with

everything we need to be concerned about with this program, and of course, our Commission meetings are public, as well as the PPEP meetings are public.

The Federal Register notice I mentioned, and the external web.

What are we going to do in the future, some of the things you might look to with the program.

We're looking at an internal survey of our own people, because we recognize that our people, our inspectors are a key stakeholder in the process. They've been doing this job for a long time, and they have and longer years of experience at inspecting power plants and the safety concerns of the plants.

We want to make sure that they're part of the process and they feel involved.

We're doing a lessons learned workshop in January, the second week. January th, we begin a lessons learned workshop. It will be at the Renaissance Hotel in Washington, D.C. It's a four-day workshop, and we're going to invite -- we're inviting members of the public to participate to find some lessons learned from this pilot program.

We'll continue the public meetings. The Commission paper should be issued towards the end of February, at which time we'll also have a Commission briefing to describe the pilot program and some of the improvements we have made to the process as a result, and April nd of the year , we begin initial implementation of the process nationwide.

One of the lessons we've learned from the pilot program is we have a lot to learn, and we need to continue to learn with the process.

The initial implementation of the program during the first several months -- licensees and utilities will have a lot of things to learn about the process, and we'll be working together to try to make sure that the guidance is clear, so that everybody using the process is coming from the same page, such that at the end of the first year of full implementation nationwide, we'll also issue another Commission paper and report to the Commission on what the overall success of the program -- because we have to get back and we have to answer these four questions that I put up earlier, these four outcome measures: Have we maintained safety, have we enhanced public confidence, have we improved the effectiveness and efficiency and the realism of our regulation, and have we reduced the unnecessary regulatory burden?

And with that, I guess that's the ,-foot view.

Now, there may be some more details we'll get into as we discuss the roundtable, and Auggie, I guess I'd like you to describe what we're here to accomplish tonight.

This is the second meeting we've held with this format, doing the roundtable discussion. We held a meeting last night in Auburn for the Cooper station, who is also a pilot participant. The two participants, obviously, in Region IV, then, are Cooper and Fort Calhoun.

MR. SPECTOR: Before I start, I want to ask, is there anybody who walked in late, possible, who I sent a letter to? Could you come up and sit at the table? We're going to change things around.

What we're going to be doing this evening is what we're calling a roundtable discussion. The idea here is that we have invited a number of people who were identified to us as people who were leaders in the community, people with emergency response agencies in the local area.

So, we've invited them to sit at the roundtable, and some of them are substituting for others who couldn't come.

So, we have to understand that, and before they came, we provided them with the internet address, the web-sites, other kinds of information so that they can become familiar with the process, and then there are other members here in the public, and there are some people from the plant, who also know about the process, and what we're going to try to do tonight is start with the roundtable, and we have some questions, and we're going to ask them these questions, and then we're going to open it up to everybody else, and if anybody has any suggestions or comments, we're here to listen, and that's what we really want to do.

To do this, the object is to, as I said, is to gain feedback and insight, as Al indicated earlier. We're going to focus on the revised oversight process. There are a lot of issues related to the plant and related to nuclear safety, but we're concentrating on the revised oversight process, not other kinds of topics that people might be interested, that's fine, but we're concentrating on this topic.

If you do have comments or suggestions related to other areas, see us after, and we'll put you in touch with the right person and help you out.

This is going to be a moderated discussion, so I'm going to try to moderate this kind of an informal fashion and maybe pick on you people, if you'd like.

The way we'll do this is -- the people at the table -- you all have a tent card like this. So, if you want to talk, instead of raising your hand, you can just put your tent card up and I'll see you.

So, we're going to try to be as informal as we possibly can.

We do have a court reporter here, Phyliss, and she's taking minutes of the meeting. If anybody would like a copy of that, let me know after the meeting, and I'll get you a copy next week, as soon as Phyliss sends it to us, you'll get a copy, and you can have it either electronically or on paper. Just tell me which one you want, and I'll mail it to you, but just let me know.

Does anybody have any questions at all?

[No response.]

MR. SPECTOR: Okay. Let's start.

What I'm going to do is put the questions on the screen. You should all have copies of them anyway. It's the same thing, but this way everybody can see it.

The first question, as we can all see, is do you believe that the new oversight process -- this is kind of a

very general question -- provides adequate assurance that all plants are operating safely. Does anybody have any reaction to that, from what Al said or from what you know from the web-site?

Bill?

MR. POOK: Well, representing Washington County local emergency management, some of the issues on the oversight are too much of a industrial-technical nature for me to really understand or comment on, but the basic premise from a layman's standpoint seems to be a pragmatic, understandable approach to inspection of any facility.

So, it looks like it's understandable, and the only question I came up with was why did it take so long to do this?

MR. SPECTOR: Well, that's a good question, as to why. I think Al mentioned something about that in his talk, the maturity of the industry.

How about some others? Anybody else?

Rick, I didn't meet you earlier, but we've talked on the phone.

MR. BAMSEY: As far as I was concerned, we'll presume that we'll continue our emergency response activities off-site with the annual training and the drills and the rehearsals and exercises.

So, really, from our perspective, it's almost transparent, although I presume the NRC knows what it's doing with respect to safety performance and the program just outlined in brief by yourself.

So, that's kind of how we're looking at it. We'll continue to do what we do off-site.

MR. SPECTOR: Which is the emergency response?

MR. BAMSEY: Precisely.

MR. SPECTOR: Okay.

One thing we know -- we had a meeting last night down at the Cooper plant, and we noticed that a lot of the questions became repetitious, if you look at these questions, and what we might do is skip some of these questions and get to it, because I think --

How about Eva? Did you have any general comments at all?

MS. FISHER: Well, I read through some of the information, and it sounded like, you know, there was a lot of good change that was going to come about this. So, it just sounded like it was a good step.

MR. SPECTOR: So, you looked at the web page?

MS. FISHER: I briefly was in the web page. I found it very friendly. So, I was pleased with that.

MR. SPECTOR: Did anybody else get a chance?

MR. POOK: We're very internet friendly in our region. It was easy to go through, and I think the general citizenship of my risk county could probably understand a great portion of it.

MR. SPECTOR: The charts?

MR. POOK: Yeah. It just seemed relatively easy to follow, because you could highlight things of particular interest, instead of going through the entire list and

actually getting lost. So, it was easy to understand.

MR. MADISON: Did the description provided in this document help with your determination as far as the overall coverage of the program?

MR. POOK: Yeah. That's what I had actually read first.

MR. MADISON: For those folks that aren't aware of it, this is our plain English description of the program, again from a higher level, and it doesn't go into great detail, but it does provide a plain English description of what the program entails and why we went about developing the program that we did.

MR. SPECTOR: John, did you have any comments?

MR. FASSELL: I'm John Fassell with the State of Nebraska, Health and Human Services Regulation and Licensure.

We mostly regulate and license the folks in the radioactive materials segment. We have another division that does x-ray, and we have a fairly extensive emergency response section that deals with the off-site consequences of nuclear power plants.

We also would view it as largely transparent to us.

What the NRC does with respect to the State of Nebraska, besides the off-site response that we help them

with, also occasionally there will be materials licensees that will be operating on the nuclear power plant grounds, and if we have the proper training to enter those areas, we can go in and inspect those materials licensees if we have the approval to do that.

That's one of the things we interact with, and also, occasionally when the plant wants to make changes, the NRC folks will call us and get our approval, as well.

They'll explain to us what changes their making in operations, so we have some input to what goes on on the plants that are in our state.

By and large, this new process should be fairly transparent to our state.

When I was looking at the web-site, I noticed that you'll have within the green ranges fairly tight and then sometimes you get to the white range, you have a fairly wide range before you get yellow for certain criteria, and my management was concerned that that white range was perhaps a little large in some areas.

MR. MADISON: Let me kind of explain the concept. One thing we did find out last night -- not that many people attended the first public meeting. So, there's probably a lot of discussion or explanation we need to go through.

We first identified what was unsafe, and we did that based upon a safety goal that the agency has of not

having an event of to the minus core damage frequency, and that's a very technical term, and I don't want to get too deep into it, but these were quantitative type measures down here for unsafe.

We stayed with that same type of quantitative measure for this threshold.

We backed off from unsafe a decade in that

quantitative measure and said we're not going to allow performance to degrade below that, because we just don't want it to ever get here, and we backed it off again quantitatively for this threshold.

When we got to this threshold, we said we're more interested in here, because of the way we want to engage, with outliers from nominal, from normal performance. So, that became actually greater than a decade backing off.

So, that band did get larger.

We want to engage earlier, basically, because we're looking for outliers, and because of the performance, the maturity of the industry, where the performance has actually improved over the last years. The performance is pretty good overall.

So, to find outliers, some of those outliers still could be considered good performers, even though they're outliers from the industry norm.

MR. SPECTOR: That brings us, actually, to the

third question. The second question is very similar to the first one.

Our lessons learned from last night was that we could skip this question, because it's very similar to that one, and we will be getting back to some of those issues, but the third question is related to does the new oversight process enhance -- and this is from a public perception point of view -- public confidence by increasing the predictability, consistency, and clarity and objectivity of the NRC oversight process, and these are related to some of the basic goals that we have for the program.

Does anybody have any thoughts on that?

Rick?

MR. BAMSEY: We would presume that you feel it does and utilities do, and we would have to humbly agree, because we're not in on the technical aspects of things.

MR. SPECTOR: So, on the surface, it seems that it does.

MR. BAMSEY: Yeah.

MR. SPECTOR: Okay.

MR. FASSELL: I would think, logically, it would, as long as you can present it to the public and as long as you keep your web-site active, and one of the problems I've had with your web-site is sometimes it takes a while to get in there. It's like there's too many people trying to

access your web-site at the same time.

MR. SPECTOR: Interesting.

MR. FASSELL: Which is unusual. But as long as you keep your web-site active and updated, I would certainly think it would make all these goals.

MR. MADISON: Is the information we're providing enough that you can come to that -- is there enough information on there for you to come to some conclusion and agree with the conclusion that we've listed as far as the performance and characteristics of the plant?

MR. FASSELL: As long as you list your standard and what the plant has met with relation to that standard, I would think so.

MR. MADISON: Have we done that? Have we

accomplished that, with what you've seen?

MR. FASSELL: As far as I've seen so far, yes.

MR. MADISON: Anybody else?

MR. POOK: This question almost relates to a couple of other ones as far as public information is concerned and getting the public informed.

First of all at Fort Calhoun, they do an excellent job of trying to keep the local public informed. They invite the local emergency planning committee in, they invite local officials in for inspections of their facility at any time.

So, they do great community relations on a local level, but on the local level we really don't hear anything from the NRC, and so, I see these questions as coming from the NRC, yet I really don't see a lot of public contact in a risk community, as Washington County is.

So, this is actually the first time I actually feel that there's an outreach by the Federal level to the local level. Since it's so infant at this stage right now, we've got to figure out a way to actually get it out onto the streets.

The web page is one, but there are so many web pages out there right now that it's almost getting lost.

MR. SPECTOR: That brings us to a feature question, and why don't we get to that, because we eventually will, and that is are there other ways that the NRC, at least, can outreach this new process to the public? Any suggestions?

MR. POOK: Because we're the only risk community, county there, we don't think that local mailings stuffed in the OPPD monthly letters to us really get attention, but it could be something such as -- we have local web servers in our community, and maybe getting space from them on their home pages, which is what everybody comes up with right away -- we have our bookmarks, and actually, because Fort Calhoun is in our back yard, maybe this web-site should be part of the permanent bookmark on our home pages in the local community.

MR. SPECTOR: The NRC web-site.

MR. POOK: The NRC web-site, so that it's more visible, it's not just one of those millions and millions of web-sites that are out there that people access once or twice and don't repeat.

MR. SPECTOR: That's an interesting suggestion. Any other suggestions?

How about people out in the audience? I know there are some other people from emergency response areas, facilities out there. Any comments on that, how the NRC could outreach, so to speak, to the public or to the interested public? Any comments at all?

AUDIENCE: Do you feel that public has been lacking in the NRC? I haven't had that sense in this area that that's been the case.

MR. MADISON: As an agency, we felt that, yeah, we could go further in improving our public confidence. That's why, again, I focused on the qualifiers on those statements, maintain safety, enhance public confidence.

I think there's obvious recognition by NRC management that we can do better in that area, and we should do better.

MR. HENDERSON: I'm Breck Henderson, the Public Affairs Officer, and one of the things that we do is we get our resident inspector engaged in going out to Kiwannis Club meetings, Rotary Club meetings, civic organizations, or even if the high school science teacher wants to have a nuclear program, we can provide materials for him to go out to these meetings and make presentations so that people in the community know who the NRC is and put a face on it and he can explain pretty well what we do.

So, that's one thing that happens in other parts of the country. I don't know that it's happened here in Nebraska recently, but that's something we can look into.

MR. MADISON: Anybody's thoughts on that, any member of the public, comment on that statement?

MR. POOK: Well, here again, to us, nuclear power is represented directly by OPPD. I don't believe we really have much an image at all of the NRC. It's just another alphabet agency that's out there, and they have something to do with the power plant, but OPPD does the outreach.

They're the people with the face that we see, and when it comes to safety issues, we hear it from them, because they're our service provider, they're our neighbors, they're our good corporate citizen in our community. They're doing a bang-up job.

Really, we don't know what the NRC does except inspection.

MR. SPECTOR: One of the areas -- this might be the same issue as earlier, and that's the issue of a balanced view of licensing performance.

We have the web page, we have other information that's given out, but do you feel that this new program would provide a balanced view of the licensee performance? Any thoughts on that?

MR. MADISON: I guess the key word there is "balanced."

MR. SPECTOR: We have the information that's coming in. Some of that information is coming from the licensee. Other information is information that we're generating through our inspection program, and we're presenting, basically, a lot of information.

MR. MADISON: One of the things we struggle with as an agency -- and we have ever since the -- splitting the two functions that used to exist of promoting and regulating, and now we're strictly regulating -- is how much public interaction is enough, is the right level, and what do we do with the public interaction.

We're not out to promote nuclear power. That's not our job. That may be the job of OPPD, and they're doing a good job of it, and that's fine, but there is, I think, a need for the public to be aware of what we do as an agency, what our job is.

The public is our employer, and our employer is due that information, and I guess what we struggle with is

the balance part of it.

We don't want to have a web-site that's Pollyannish and giving a rosy picture of performance of the plant, but we don't want to also give just bad information and you don't get the whole picture of performance of the plant, because that's why I said the key word there is "balanced."

Do you get the full picture of performance at the facility?

MR. FASSELL: I think that you keep it just fine as long as it is as technical as it needs to be but no more technical than that, and then when the public accesses your web-site, someplace on that web-site you should have a reference where they can go and find out, say, what scram means, or these terms that are basically in the nuclear industry and those of us that work with it know what it means, but the public sees that and they're going to go huh

MR. MADISON: Charlie's got a good explanation for that. He shared it last night. That's a good point.

MR. HENDERSON: There is a glossary on there.

MR. SPECTOR: One of the tick-marks is a glossary, but even so, you have to do some struggling to get there. Good point.

You can still do it, Charlie. It's all right.

MR. MARSCHALL: Fission reactions in nuclear power plants depend on neutrons, and one of the ways that we control -- that Fort Calhoun controls the reaction or Cooper controls the reaction is by use of control rods which consist of materials that absorb neutrons, and when we start a plant up, we pull the control rods out of the core so that they stop absorbing neutrons and the fission reaction can occur.

Under certain conditions, either when the licensees decide to shut the plant down or because some condition warrants it, those rods are inserted in the core.

Now, if it's done manually during a controlled shutdown, it's a gradual process, but if, for instance, there were no place to put the electricity that's created by the generator so that we want to stop generating the heat that's being created in the core through the fission process, automatic controls take charge and the control rods are rapidly inserted in the core.

In pressurized water reactors like Fort Calhoun, that's commonly called a trip. In boiling water reactors, it's commonly referred to as scram. There's a little bit of history behind why that's called a scram.

In the first atomic pile that was created in this country, the reactor consisted of graphite blocks, and there were control rods in that reactor, as well.

Those control rods, though, weren't inserted or withdrawn with sophisticated mechanisms like we have today; they were basically controlled by rope. They were suspended by ropes that went over a pulley, and the ropes were tied off, they pulled the control rods out of the core, and they tied it off, and in case things got out of control, they had a man there with an ax. That man was called the safety control rod ax-man.

So, when they wanted to shut the plant down and get people out of the room, by the way, they would say scram, and he'd cut the rope, and the rods would drop in the core, and that's where scram comes from.

MR. SPECTOR: The next question is this question: Is the information provided by the NRC appropriate to keep the public informed of the agency's activities?

So, we all know what scram means, and we'll be tested later. How about other information? I think we basically talked about this question earlier, but we do have the question.

MR. POOK: Some us at this table have a vested interest because we have peripheral responsibilities with off-site response to a potential event, but I was almost thinking as I read through this booklet and looked at the web-site, for the common citizen who is in a very busy environment nowadays themselves and doesn't have a lot of time to do like even newspapers, if maybe there was even a summary to the initial page that you showed up there on your web-site, with all the blocks and the hot-buttons that you can push, I was almost thinking of, you know, how can this be reduced down to a simple one-page statement that kind of tells me the general overall and then if I have the time to go through --

Now, I attended the plant performance review meeting, and I have a copy of that report. I went as a representative of my community, and what I actually had to do with that was I just summarized it down to about three or four paragraphs of information that was relative to the off-site community, because if I would have given a PPR to any concerned citizen, they would have read the first couple of lines and it would have sat there collecting dust.

So, I was thinking how could we even summarize this to a cover sheet, an electronic cover sheet of sorts, so that I can read this in three or four minutes, and if I'm interested, I can go further; if not, at least I know what's there.

MR. SPECTOR: So, have different levels of -- a basic level and then more advanced levels and give people the opportunity to choose.

MR. POOK: Because people are busy nowadays.

MR. SPECTOR: Sure.

MR. POOK: If you can't grab their attention in the first seconds or first paragraph, then you've lost your customer.

MR. MADISON: I guess our thinking -- and maybe you can tell us if we've gone wrong on this -- was that we have a pictorial view in the color coding, kind of catch people's eye, and by looking at the one page, if you see all green, that should provide that answer to you of what the overall performance of the plant is, and if you see other colors, that tells you there may be some concerns in those specific areas.

We do, on an annual basis, with this process, issue a summary of the overall performance of the plant for the year.

You know, the current process, we do that on a

much less frequent basis. It's done every to months, and it's called the systematic assessment of licensee performance, and it's been criticized roundly for being too little too late and not necessarily being as understandable, because we've tried to squeeze a lot of folks into giving them one grade for their whole performance over the last to months, and it's not very reflective of actual performance.

So, we tried to get away from that and go more to providing a picture of performance, and that's what we're trying to get with the colors.

MR. POOK: For me, not being a scientist of sorts or that type of a technician, I found it refreshing. I was able to zero in on several different areas.

I was just taking it one step further to, you know, the common citizen who is not involved in hazardous material, is not involved in a rep program, just knows that there's a nuclear power plant in our county, and just wants some basic reassurance and doesn't even want to go as far as what your web page --

I know it's frustrating. You've done a good job already.

MR. SPECTOR: This has only been up for about six or seven months. So, we're looking for ways of improving it.

How about Eva?

Did you have any comments?

MS. FISHER: No.

MR. SPECTOR: One of the areas that we're interested in is the area of resources, and this question is: Do you believe that the new oversight process improves the efficiency and effectiveness of the NRC's regulatory process?

We're trying to focus our resources on issues which are more safety significant. And resources -- obviously, we're talking about human resources as well as financial resources, just our general resources within the agency.

This is getting down to the bottom line here.

MR. MADISON: Is this an important issue for you?

MR. BAMSEY: If one presumes that the lack thereof would cause an off-site incident to --

MR. MADISON: Does it bother you that we're concerned about the amount of resources we spend?

MR. BAMSEY: I think all of us have to be concerned, given the budgets and other things. It's like you're just focusing the more directly at times.

MS. FISHER: How does OPPD feel about this process? How are they feeling about the effectiveness?

MR. MADISON: Does a member of OPPD want to provide a perspective?

MR. CHASE: Would you repeat the question?

MS. FISHER: How is OPPD feeling about the effectiveness of this new regulation from the NRC?

MR. CHASE: My name is Jim Chase, and I'm the Division Manager of Nuclear Assessments, and I've been working with the NRC for over a year now to develop this new

process, and we think that the process is much improved, because it allows us to manage our station, but still -- we

still focus on safety, and the NRC focuses on safety, also, and we think that it's more efficient and it gets to the bottom line in regards to reactor safety and how well we're performing in that area. So, I think it's a good process. We embrace it.

MS. FISHER: Thank you.

MR. SPECTOR: This is really open for general discussion at any time.

MR. GAMBHIR: My name is Sadesh Gambhir. I'm the Division Manager of Nuclear Operations. I have responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the plant.

The new process focuses of what is safety significant. NRC is involved -- engaged in those items. If the item is not significant, then we have the responsibility to deal with that. That's where the green band is.

It allows us to put our resources where they're most needed, because one has to look at -- if there are so many resources that you have and if you are going to be spending time on the things that are not significant, then somewhere, you know, you're not spending where you should be.

So, this allows us to put our resources where they need to be, and like Jim mentioned, we have embraced this process. We did have a meeting at the plant today, where we gave them detailed comments on each of these items.

I would say yes, it's a pretty good process, and we have to keep up with that. You know, like somebody said here, the web-site has to be kept up to date, and we have to do our part. We have to run the plant good.

MR. SPECTOR: Thank you very much.

Anybody else who would like to make any other comments related to this?

[No response.]

MR. SPECTOR: Another area which is key to our program is the question of regulatory burden, and do you believe that the new oversight process reduces unnecessary regulatory burden on the licensee and the NRC, and this is a pretty crucial question to us, and we'd like to get some feedback on that.

Bill?

MR. POOK: The baseline -- is this done on a quarterly review process? Each quarter you're reviewing the baseline?

MR. MADISON: The baseline program, as it's been developed, is a -month program.

We get reports on the performance indicators or updated on a quarterly basis, and we update the plant issues matrix, which collects these inspection findings on a quarterly basis, but the entire program is set up over a -month period.

MR. POOK: So, how does that compare with, then, the old program? Was that also a cumulative over a -month period?

MR. MADISON: Actually, it was over an -to--

month period. It spread the plan over a longer period of time.

There are pros and cons to it.

We felt that a -month program and an annual report, an overall kind of summary report, was more responsive to the public need.

MR. POOK: So, you're doing the same amount of work of months now in ?

MR. MADISON: No. The amount of hours at a good performing plant, a well performing plant, is probably pretty similar, total hours per year. It's focused more in areas that we felt were more safety significant, and the plan is just set to spread those hours.

Now, the frequency of some of the inspections that are occurring -- for example, currently, there's a triennial fire protection inspection.

So, in other words, not every inspection occurs every year. That inspection would occur once every three years.

MR. WALKER: The resident inspections are the same, though, as far as the timely -- we still have

inspection reports every six weeks. That hasn't changed under the new program, but there is some discussion about going, possibly, to a quarterly report with that, too.

MR. POOK: The quarterly reviews -- is that information, then, incorporated into the color coding performance indicators, so it could actually fluctuate between any -month period what color stage something might be at?

MR. MARSCHALL: Actually, the quarterly reviews look at the colors.

These colors that we're looking at are whether it reflects the performance indicators, which is gathering data -- the people at Fort Calhoun gather data and report it to us, and based on calculations of reliability of equipment and so forth, we compute these colors. Those are reflections of equipment and people performance in the plant.

The other indicators have to do with findings. Those are things that people like Wayne go out into the plant and people that we send up from Texas periodically go out into the plant and look at performance, and sometimes they come up with issues, and depending on how significant they are in terms of safety, they get a color.

So, those green findings would indicate something that came up but didn't have a lot of risk significance, and

once we found it and evaluate it in terms of risk significance, we basically expect the licensee to take care of it, because they have a program to do that, required by law.

The biggest differences between the old program and the new program have more to do with what drives our process as far as what we look at when we go out to do inspection.

In the past -- you're probably aware of the fact that we grant organizations such as OPPD a license to operate the plant, and that license comes with a set of

rules that are legal requirements that they have to obey when they operate, maintain the facility.

In the past, the inspection was guided basically by the approach that, if they adhere to the regulations, then the plant is operated safely, and I think that's still true, but we've come to believe that a more sophisticated approach that would help improve safety is to guide the inspection based on the risk significance of issues, of pieces of equipment, how important those are.

What I mean by risk significance is how important those things are to ensuring that the plant is operated safely.

So, the focus is away from -- although we still look at this as kind of a by-product of the inspection

process, the focus is away from are you complying with the regulations and just going down the list of the regulations and seeing the licensees comply.

The focus now is trying to be smart.

Which pieces of equipment, for example, are most important, and focusing our inspection on those pieces of equipment, and if they're taken out of service for some reason, if they break, paying particular attention to those things to make sure that Fort Calhoun folks do the right thing to put it back in service.

We think, because of the fact that we're looking at it from that point of view, it will drive Fort Calhoun folks to look at it from that point of view, and in fact, I think, even beyond that, they see the wisdom in putting your resources to the things that matter most in terms of providing safety to the public.

So, their focus is there, our focus is there, and we believe that that will improve the safety for the people who live outside the fence in the vicinity of the plant.

MR. MADISON: One other aspect maybe -- there's a mis-perception here.

The performance indicators are rolling averages that may encompass a year's worth of information or, in some cases, three years' worth of information, because frankly, not that many things happen at a nuclear power plant that

you can count and come up with a significant number and assign a threshold to action to it. So, we generally have to look at a large period of time to come up with some activity for numbers to count.

So, many of them are at least -- all of them are at least months, and many of them are three-year averages that we count for performance indicators.

The same thing is true with the inspection program. You can't look -- a resident inspector just can't look at everything that we want them to look at in a quarter or in a month.

So, over a year, we expect to accomplish a certain amount of activity and look at certain numbers of things to assure ourselves that we've covered the areas that are important under the cornerstones.

So, over that -month period, we've accomplished what we thought is necessary to sample and to look at the activities at that plant.

MR. BROCKMAN: Ken Brockman, Director of Reactor Projects, Region IV.

I think one thing that may help you -- let's define what is regulatory burden, and I'm going to do it with some examples.

Charlie mentioned the regulation that we may have that a licensee is bound to comply with. In the past, if we found they were not in compliance with that regulation, we would have given them an official document that was a citation for not being in compliance with it. They would have then had to perform a detailed analysis, make a response back to us, and get into very detailed letter-writing activity back and forth. This could have been for a violation as simple as didn't have a proper signature on a piece of paper, or it could have been for something as significant as a very important piece of equipment was not operating as it should.

When we're talking about now the regulatory burden associated with it, that's the type of things we're talking about.

The new process allows -- the licensee still has to be in compliance with the regulations.

They will still have to fix that problem with signatures not being on that piece of paper, but our process would be, if you've captured it in your corrective action program and you're tracking it, we'll go out and sample that, but we don't need to get into the large burden of responding back and forth to each other in a written format, which you'd be surprised how much -- no, I don't think you would be surprised as to how much resources that takes up, going into that arena.

That's one way in which a regulatory burden may be reduced.

A second way would be the inspection programs we've got coming out.

There is a certain amount of overhead that goes along with supporting an inspection coming out to look at something.

I think Iowa and Nebraska, especially, can appreciate that, and I know you all can. I mean the overhead that goes along with respect to these types of things is significant.

So, if you've got to spend that overhead, you want to spend it making sure you're really focusing on the risk-significant items.

That's where this program is trying to get us into the inspections we do. The interactions that we have that require a substantial amount of resources are spent on risk-significant issues.

Those issues that are not as risk-significant, the licensee still embraces, still commits to fix, captures it within their own program.

We will go out and sample that to ensure that their program is vibrant, but we don't get into the large overhead associated with that that was in the past program, and that's what we would mean by reduction of unnecessary regulatory burden.

Maybe that helps.

MR. FASSELL: From this, it appears that there's no actual plans to change your regulations at this time, just to change how you implement those regulations?

MR. MADISON: No, that's outside the scope of my task force. There is another task force associated with looking at risk-informing -- what we're calling risk-informing the regulations, and we're taking a look at -- as an agency, we're looking at the regulations.

We're seeing where there are regulations that were written maybe in years past that are not commensurate -- that the work associated with those is not commensurate with their risk, and so, they may need to be rephrased or eliminated, and that process is ongoing.

We're a little bit ahead of the game as far as providing the oversight -- risk-informing the oversight process, and as an agency, some of this is catching on, and maybe I ought to mention NMSS, another office within the agency that looks at the materials safety -- what does the acronym stand for? Nuclear Materials Safety and Safeguards?

I wanted to be sure before I said it, but they're also looking at a similar process for oversight on the fuel cycle facilities, in developing a cornerstone concept for those, and this type of oversight and risk-informing the oversight process and the regulations is probably going to

sweep through the entire agency over time.

MR. FASSELL: They're not thinking about also extending it, say, to radiography facilities or those that are less controlled.

MR. MADISON: Not now, but NMSS is using the fuel cycle facilities as kind of their lead test case to see how it works.

MR. FASSELL: Another question I had dealt with are there any plans to change your current manning of the number of inspectors at the sites?

MR. MARSCHALL: There is under discussion consideration of reducing the number of resident inspectors at good performing multi-unit sites.

We currently have what's called N-plus-one staffing levels for resident inspectors at sites, and that means, at a single-unit site, you know, the number of sites is -- N is one -- we have two inspectors, and at a two-unit site, we would have three inspectors, and under discussion is the possibility, at multi-unit sites that are good performers, of going down to N inspectors.

So, if it was a two-unit site, we would have two inspectors, but I don't believe that there is any consideration of going to less than two inspectors at single-unit sites, for example.

MR. FASSELL: Would there be any change to the

amount of documentation that's required at nuclear power plants for almost every action?

MR. MARSCHALL: Actually, we don't have a specific requirement -- well, we do have guidance that's available that tells inspectors how to write inspection reports.

It's called manual chapter , but honestly, the

approach to how we do the inspection and how we assess the findings has more to do with the amount of documentation that we have in the inspection reports than what's in the manual chapter.

That's what I've actually seen as a result of the implementation of the pilot plants, the pilot program Cooper and Fort Calhoun in this region.

In the past, inspectors were really pretty much free to document a wide range of things, and they weren't just risk-significant issues, they weren't just non-compliances, things that they had found that didn't meet the requirements of the regulations; they also included positive findings and negative findings, which were pretty judgmental in nature and varied widely from one inspector to another, because we really didn't have any established standards for what we needed to say about those kinds of things, and one of the things that's happened as a result of the implementation of this program is what we write about is issues that have risk significance and non-compliances and a

few other things that we think are important, but we even have guidelines for those.

So, one of the things that's happened is the length of the inspection reports has shrunk significantly and they're much more focused than they were in the past, in my opinion anyway.

MR. MADISON: But what we're trying to accomplish at the same time is provide enough information on the issues that we do document that you clearly understand why they are significant and what the significance is.

MR. MARSCHALL: And that manual chapter that I spoke of actually has some fairly explicit guidance on just exactly what Al's talking about, making sure that we explain issues well enough so that the public -- anyone that reads our inspection report -- and of course, they are available to the public -- anyone that reads them has enough information to understand why we think that's an important issue.

MR. SPECTOR: Anymore questions?

MR. BROCKMAN: Ken Brockman again. It's a question that I've got for you all, is the new process and where we're going, that guidance that Charlie was talking about, really focuses us on identifying the performance issues that are of concern.

Now, you'll get performance indicator data. We

talked about, you know, what's a piece of equipment doing and what have you, so you'll get that reported on the web, both the good and the bad, but the inspection reports, John, what you brought up, will now only be providing you those issues where there were difficulties of some level that hit a threshold.

You won't have in the new process a listing of all the great things that were done. That's an understood. We're only going to be reporting by exception, and that's where we talked about earlier on balance, is a question that we've got with respect to ensuring that doesn't cause a problem.

So, if you hear nothing, that means this plant is

being operated totally within the safety margins that we think are adequate to allow them to be in control of their destiny, to be in that licensee response band.

That is a difference. That is a change, and it's a good question to make sure that you all are comfortable with representing the public, that providing that's understood and you advertise it that way, does that cause a problem?

MR. SPECTOR: Anybody have any comment on that? Do you feel comfortable with that approach?

MR. POOK: I wouldn't think our citizens in Washington County would have any problems with that at all.

That's the old adage, no news is good news, so to speak.

MR. FASSELL: That way you find less of a tendency to be drowned in details of little value, whereas you could go right to the point.

MR. POOK: Because we are too busy and we're not nuclear technicians, and so, only tell us what we need to know, and make sure the lights are running. That's our main concern from the citizen's standpoint, and off-site safety during our exercises.

MR. SPECTOR: Well, that gets us into the last question, which is -- and this might be kind of a summary and a little redundancy from others, but are there any appropriate means by which the agency could solicit stakeholder feedback in a timely, structured, and consistent manner on the pilot program and eventually on all -- or initial implementation first, then full implementation later on?

I think somebody alluded to that earlier. I don't remember who it was, but any comments on that, other things that we could do?

MS. FISHER: Well, you said you have like a comment page, right, that you can direct your questions to?

MR. SPECTOR: Yes.

MS. FISHER: So, I would think that that would take care of that feedback that you would be receiving.

MR. MADISON: Has anybody here, other than members of the licensee's staff, responded to the Federal Register notice? Does anybody here know what the Federal Register notice is?

MR. POOK: Sure, because of our involvement with EPA and their processes.

MR. SPECTOR: You can respond either in paper copy or you can respond via an e-mail.

MR. BAMSEY: I think our health department is about to respond.

MR. SPECTOR: And that response period, for the general notice, is December st, the last day.

MR. MADISON: The format of this meeting -- was it useful?

MR. BAMSEY: I think the outreach program that Eric runs, that was started several years ago, was well-received, and this is not unlike that a little bit. That's been well-received across the country, I suspect, and that's been going on for how many years? Quite a few.

MR. SPECTOR: Brock, did you have anything that

you wanted to add or say?

MR. HENDERSON: Well, I guess I could add one thing.

Our mission at OPA is to make sure that the NRC does everything out in the open, and our web-site is

something that we have gone to in order to do that, because a lot of reporters all over the country get into our web-site every day, and some of them call me up and say, gee, I saw this little inspection thingy here, and what's the deal, you know, and so, I end up explaining the details of some inspection that was done that found a problem to a reporter who looks at those things, but you know, the problem we have is that good news isn't news, sometimes, and so, if everything is running well at a plant, we tend to fade into the background, and we do get caught, also, in this mission that the NRC has for inspecting and ensuring public health and safety but yet not promoting.

So, we're not able to go out and say everybody look at us, aren't we doing a great job, because that sometimes is perceived as falling under the promotion activity, and we're not chartered to do that.

So, I think we have -- as long as things are running well, it's a difficult job to get out and tell people what's going on, and I think we need to make more efforts to do that with our resident inspectors, and you know, we try to be as responsive at OPA as we can to any public request that we get.

I get requests all the time from junior high kids who are working on their science projects and want to know about nuclear power, and I bundle up some stuff and send it

to them, and we have some little brochures, and I sent them our web-site, which has a really good page for school kids on it, and for teachers, and so, we do as much as we can in that area, and I hope that that's effective, and so, you know, if there's anything that we can ever do at public affairs to help you with any of these kind of activities, please let me know, and we'll be happy to do as much as we can.

MR. SPECTOR: Let me just ask one more question that's not on here. Al and myself and others are going to be going back to Washington -- in fact, we're going to leave tomorrow morning.

Is there one thing, or maybe even two, but are there certain things that you want to make sure that we bring back to Washington? I don't mean to the President but back to the people, related to the program?

MS. FISHER: I would just say that, as long as your restructuring doesn't put a burden on those inspectors and that they still are doing their job and highlighting the main things that need to be corrected and not to cut them back where you're tying their hands behind their backs. It sounds like this should free them up.

MR. POOK: And just to be sensitive to anybody's perception that this is a restructuring that's in a down-size mode where you're trying to have inspectors do more

with less or do more in a shorter timeframe, because I think

that, generally speaking, we have a lot of confidence in the nuclear program, and we just don't want to see anything shortchanged in it.

So, if there is a perception, be sensitive to it, because sometimes people are a little bit more suspicious nowadays of what reorganization really means. That's just another buzz-word for down-sizing or something.

MR. MADISON: Yeah. I may want to address that.

This is not a -- in fact, we haven't quantified what the resources to accomplish this program are going to take. We made some rough estimates of what those resources might be, but we recognized at the beginning of the pilot that part of the reason for the pilot and part of the purpose for the initial implementation is to gather enough data to tell us how much it's going to take to do this. We don't know.

We know we have some objectives we want to achieve, and we've told the inspectors to do what it takes to achieve those objectives; we'll collect the data and determine how many resources we need to spend.

We're not looking at setting the program up to -- that it's going to reduce a certain amount of resources in the agency. What we are looking to do is take the resources that we have and use them smarter.

Congress is handing us a smaller budget every year so far. So, we do have to get smarter with what we have, and that's what this process was geared to do.

MR. SPECTOR: John?

MR. FASSELL: The state, quite often, looks to the NRC as technical lead on certain issues, and I would say one of the most important issues is trying to maintain that technical leadership, maintain the staff on hand in a wide variety of nuclear areas, so that when we have an obscure question we have someone we can call, especially with a regulatory background.

MR. SPECTOR: That has the knowledge.

MR. FASSELL: We have a lot of consultants that we can call. A lot of the consultants are -year ex-NRC employees.

MR. SPECTOR: Okay. We won't go into anymore on that one.

MR. BAMSEY: I think many people still have the erroneous impression that the NRC is promoting the industry. How do you folks deal with that? This is one way of dealing with that, by the way, this session and the program you've outlined. Are there other ways?

MR. MADISON: I guess I'd ask you where you're coming from on that.

MR. BAMSEY: Many people still have that

impression, I think, wrongly, I believe. I read articles about it a lot. There are a lot of anti-nuclear groups who will use many agendas to get to where they need to be. I'm just curious about that whole question.

I don't believe it, working with the NRC quite a bit.

MR. MADISON: Well, that's one of the reasons why we're here. It's one of the reasons why we've asked the

question, are we providing a balanced perspective, because we do wish to combat that.

There is probably that, at least, belief amongst some. We need to deal with it, and that's why we're asking the questions now. Are there other ways that we can? Are there other ways that we can do that?

MR. BAMSEY: This is one way, obviously, these meetings such as this, and the outreach programs, and I'm not sure how to answer that.

MR. MADISON: We're here to learn, too, from you folks as far as what you think, if there's better ways of doing outreach, a better way of doing this type of a process. We'd like to get that information.

MR. FASSELL: You said David Lockbaum of the Union of Concerned Scientists is on your panel.

MR. MADISON: Uh-huh.

MR. FASSELL: One of the primary information sources on the web of the anti-nuclear type would be the Nuclear Information Resource Service. Have they had anything to say about this particular program?

MR. MADISON: They have not responded yet. They probably will. We haven't gotten their response.

MR. SPECTOR: We do have public meetings in Washington.

MR. FASSELL: That's the one that speaks most loudly and quite coherently on a number of specific -- whenever you come up with a Federal Register notice, they have specific, line-by-line, either refutation or agreement with.

MR. SPECTOR: Well, hopefully we'll get their response.

MR. FASSELL: Although they do tend to advocate EPA regulation for radiation, as opposed to the NRC, from time to time.

MR. SPECTOR: Does anybody have any comments?

[No response.]

MR. SPECTOR: I think we've gone through basically all the questions.

I'd like to thank everybody for coming, especially the group who's been under the gun a little bit here, but we really appreciate it, and we appreciate the fact that you all took an evening out to come, and please go into the web-site. If you'd like to respond in writing to the Federal Register notice, feel free to do that. We look forward to that.

Again, if anybody would like a copy of the transcript, once it's all typed up, I'll mail it to you if you'd like, and that will end the meeting.

MR. MADISON: I would also like to thank folks for coming, and recognize, please, that this is the beginning of the process. This isn't the last time, I hope, that you see this type of gathering for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to share knowledge and share the process.

We expect to get out -- it may not be myself coming out. It's like to be more from the region, the regional involvement, but we expect to continue to do this type of outreach to make sure that the public continues to

feel like they're invited to the table, because it is a sincere invitation to the table to participate in the process.

Thank you.

MR. SPECTOR: Thank you very much.

[Whereupon, at 8:30 p.m., the meeting was concluded.]