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CONSOLIDATION OF TWO NRC WESTERN REGIONS EFFECTIVE ON APRIL 4

The consolidation of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's two western regions — authorized by the Commission last year — will take effect Monday, April 4.

On that date, the responsibilities of NRC Region IV, which is headquartered in Arlington, Texas, will be expanded to cover licensed nuclear activities in the seven-state territory which has been overseen by NRC Region V from an office in Walnut Creek, California.

The new regional territory will cover 21 states — Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Louisiana, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

NRC is retaining an operation in Walnut Creek, which will be known as the Walnut Creek Field Office and which will be part of Region IV. The Walnut Creek staff will be responsible for inspections at operational nuclear power plants in Arizona, California and Washington, as well as for licensing and inspection of nuclear materials and fuel facility licensees in those three states, plus Alaska, Hawaii, Nevada and Oregon.

Also assigned to the Walnut Creek office are a public affairs officer, two NRC investigators, an allegations coordinator, a state liaison officer, and an agreement states officer. Altogether, the field office staff totals approximately 45 persons, including resident inspectors stationed at nuclear power plants.

The field office director, who will report to the Region IV Texas office, is Kenneth E. Perkins Jr., a veteran NRC senior manager who has been in Walnut Creek since August 1990, first as deputy director, then director, of the Division of Reactor Safety and Projects, and later as Region V administrator.

The organizational realignment does not change NRC regulatory activities in the 14 states which formerly made up Region IV. Continuing to be directed from the Texas office will be inspections at operating nuclear power plants in Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Nebraska and Texas, plus nuclear materials licensing and inspections in those states as well as in Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming.

Region IV on March 1 assumed lead responsibility for response to emergencies at licensed nuclear operations in all 21 states of the newly enlarged regional area. Under this arrangement, field emergency response will be coordinated from the NRC incident response center in Arlington.

Region IV is headed by L. Joe Callan, administrator, and Dr. John M. Montgomery, deputy administrator. With its new organization it is responsible for field regulatory oversight of 19 commercial nuclear power plant units and approximately 1,000 NRC-regulated nuclear materials licensees (activities such as nuclear medicine, industrial radiography and well-logging).

About 7550 more materials licensees are regulated by the states of Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Kansas, Louisiana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, Texas, Utah and Washington, all of which have agreements with NRC to regulate radioactive byproduct and source materials.

NRC commissioners directed the Region IV-V consolidation as a cost-reduction measure. NRC's Uranium Recovery Field Office in Denver, also part of Region IV, is being phased out and will be closed by this fall.

NRC has three other regional offices: Region I, King of Prussia, Pennsylvania (Philadelphia area); Region II, Atlanta, Georgia; and Region III, Lisle, Illinois (Chicago area).

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