

UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, REGION II
101 Marietta St., Suite 2900, Atlanta, GA 30323
Tel. 404-331-5503 or 7878

No: II-97-09

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts: Ken Clark (404) 331-5503

(Tuesday, January 14, 1997)

Roger Hannah (404) 331-7878

**FARLEY NUCLEAR PLANT RATED "SUPERIOR" IN TWO AREAS,
"GOOD" IN TWO OTHER AREAS OF NRC ASSESSMENT REPORT**

The Farley nuclear power plant received performance ratings of "superior" in two areas and "good" in two areas of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's latest systematic assessment of licensee performance (SALP) of the facility.

The SALP report was sent January 9 to Southern Nuclear Operating Company, which operates the facility near Columbia, Alabama. It evaluates the plant's performance from March 26, 1995 through November 23 of 1996.

NRC and Southern officials will discuss the report during a meeting set for 10:30 a.m. (CST) Wednesday, January 22, at the Farley site. The meeting will be open for public observation. NRC officials will be available after the meeting to speak with reporters, state and local officials, and members of the public.

The NRC SALP process rates licensees in four functional areas - plant operations, maintenance, engineering, and plant support - and assigns ratings of Category 1, 2 or 3 depending on whether their performance in those areas was superior, good or adequate.

The report on Farley gives the plant a Category 1 rating in plant operations and engineering indicating "superior" performance, and a Category 2 rating in maintenance and plant support, indicating "good" performance. The ratings were the same in the plant's previous SALP report, issued in May 1995, with the exception of the plant support area which declined from a Category 1 rating to a Category 2.

In his cover letter to the report, NRC Regional Administrator Luis Reyes said that in operations "superior performance was characterized by conservative plant management decisions, and strong operator knowledge and ability..."

In the maintenance area, Reyes wrote that maintenance was well planned and controlled, but challenges remained in non-nuclear plant equipment performance, personnel errors and the availability of the emergency diesel generators.

Reyes highlighted superior engineering performance with strengths in management involvement and oversight, a well-qualified staff and high quality licensing submittals.

In the plant support area, Reyes noted strong performance in security and an effective emergency preparedness program, but wrote that radiological control and fire protection activities both exhibited a decline in performance.

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EDITORS: A copy of the full SALP report is available from this office. SALP reports are also available on the NRC's Internet web site (<http://www.nrc.gov/OPA>) and by e-mail subscription. To receive SALP reports by e-mail as they are issued, send an e-mail to listproc@nrc.gov with the following message: subscribe salp yourfirstname yourlastname.