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LATEST NRC STAFF REVIEW RATES CLINTON PLANT "GOOD" IN MAINTENANCE
"ADEQUATE" IN PLANT OPERATIONS, ENGINEERING, AND PLANT SUPPORT

The Clinton Nuclear Power Plant, operated by Illinois Power Company, has received performance ratings of "good" in maintenance and "adequate" in plant operations, engineering, and plant support, the four areas of review in the Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff's latest Systematic Assessment of Licensee Performance (SALP) report for the facility. The plant is located near Clinton, Illinois.

The assessment covers the period from June 25, 1995, through April 5 of this year.

The NRC staff and Illinois Power Company officials will discuss the evaluation during a meeting set for 1 p.m. on July 2 at the Energy and Environmental Center at the Clinton Power Station, Route 54, east of Clinton, Illinois.

The meeting will be open to public observation. NRC officials will be available afterwards to speak with reporters, state and local officials, and members of the public.

NRC SALP reports rate utilities in four functional areas -- plant operations, maintenance, engineering, and plant support -- and assign ratings of Category 1, 2, or 3 depending on whether their performance in those areas is superior, good or adequate. The report on Clinton gives the plant a "Category 2" rating -- indicating good performance -- in maintenance and a "Category 3" rating -- indicating adequate performance -- in operations, engineering, and plant support.

NRC Regional Administrator A. Bill Beach, in a letter to the utility, said, "Although the safe operation of the facility was never a question, there has been a notable decline in performance."

The Clinton plant has been shut down since September 5, 1996, when efforts to reduce a leak from a pump seal led to the

failure of the seal and shutdown of the plant. "The event was unique in that the operators caused the event rather than taking the action necessary to mitigate the situation," Beach said.

Many of the conclusions in the SALP report are based on the inspections growing out of the utility's handling of the seal leak. The NRC's review of the September 5 incident found a "significant procedural adherence problem," Beach said. "Subsequent special and routine inspection identified that procedural adherence problems were pervasive in virtually all site organizations," he added.

NRC inspection activities also identified a number of hardware deficiencies, including long standing problems with feedwater check valves, inadequate maintenance on safety-related circuit breakers, and, more recently, inadequate assessment of degraded containment coatings.

"In each case," Beach said, "NRC intervention was required to ensure [utility] management understanding and [that] attention was focused on development and implementation of appropriate corrective actions."

The SALP report recognizes that Illinois Power has made significant improvements in the deficient areas over the past three months.

Beach said, "Illinois Power took aggressive, effective actions to address the procedure adherence and quality issues." He also noted that significant efforts have been implemented to correct the hardware issues -- feedwater check valves, circuit breakers, and containment coatings.

The ratings for this SALP period and the previous period are:

<u>Functional Area</u>	<u>Current Period</u>	<u>Previous Period</u>
Operations	3	2
Maintenance	2	1
Engineering	3	2
Plant Support	3	1

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SALP reports may be viewed on the NRC's internet web site at <<http://www.nrc.gov/OPA>>. The reports for all plants may be obtained by e-mail, as issued. Send an e-mail message to listproc@nrc.gov with no subject and the following message:
subscribe SALP yourfirstname yourlastname.