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Office of Public Affairs, Region II**

101 Marietta St., Suite 2900, Atlanta, GA 30323
Tel. 404-331-5503 or 7878

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Contacts: Ken Clark 404-331-5503
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Roger Hannah 404-331-7878

**OCONEE NUCLEAR PLANT RATED "SUPERIOR" IN THREE
AREAS, "GOOD" IN FOURTH AREA OF NRC ASSESSMENT REPORT**

The Oconee nuclear power plant received performance ratings of "superior" in plant operations, engineering and plant support, and "good" in maintenance in the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's latest systematic assessment of licensee performance (SALP) of the facility.

The SALP report was sent June 10 to Duke Power Company, which operates the facility near Seneca, South Carolina. It evaluates the plant's performance from October 30, 1994, through May 4 of this year.

NRC and Duke Power Company officials will discuss the report during a meeting set for 1:00 p.m. Thursday, June 27, at the Oconee 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.

NRC systematic assessment reports rate licensees 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 was superior, good or adequate. The report on Oconee gives the plant a Category 1 rating in plant operations, engineering and plant support, indicating "superior" performance, and a Category 2 rating in maintenance, indicating "good" performance. In the previous SALP report in 1994, the plant received a 1 in plant support and 2's in plant operations, engineering and maintenance.

In his cover letter to the report, NRC Regional Administrator Stewart Ebnetter said "Oconee's performance improved markedly during this period in the functional areas of engineering and operations, with sustained superior performance in the area of plant support." Ebnetter attributed the improvement in part to "an aggressive self-assessment and corrective action program."

In the letter, Ebnetter said performance in the maintenance area remained good "with notable improvement in some areas." However, he pointed to challenges remaining in fuel handling, human performance and equipment failures.

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EDITORS: A copy of the full SALP report is available from this office.