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Region III Office of Public Affairs
801 Warrenville Road, Lisle, IL 60532-4351

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CONTACT: Jan Strasma 630/829-9663
Angela Greenman 630/829-9662
E-mail: opa3@nrc.gov

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NRC FINDS PERFORMANCE 'ACCEPTABLE'
AT BYRON NUCLEAR POWER PLANT IN LATEST REVIEW

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has found that safety performance remains acceptable in the NRC's latest plant performance review at the Byron nuclear power plant, located near Byron, Illinois.

The review covers April 1 of last year through January 31.

Geoffrey Grant, NRC Region III Division Director, in a letter to Commonwealth Edison Company, said, "Overall performance at Byron Generating Station was acceptable. The operation of the facility was conducted in a safe and controlled manner. The material condition of the plant was very good due to engineering support and the high quality of maintenance work, which resulted in a dual unit run for most of the assessment period with few challenges to the operating staff."

"However, recurring configuration control issues and human performance errors represented significant challenges which had not yet been effectively addressed," Grant continued. "The plant support programs such as radiation protection, chemistry, and security were well implemented."

The text of the plant performance review letter is available from the NRC Region III Office of Public Affairs and on the NRC web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/OPA/ppr>.

NRC reviews safety performance twice a year at every licensed nuclear power plant in the nation. These reviews give the agency staff an integrated assessment of plant performance and provide a basis for planning inspection activities.

Plant performance reviews are an interim measure NRC is utilizing to monitor nuclear power plant safety. The agency began using it for this purpose after suspending the Systematic Assessment of License Performance (SALP) process until a new assessment program is developed. Previously, SALP reports were issued every 12 to 24 months.

The new reactor oversight and assessment program being developed will provide quarterly performance reports, based on a number of performance indicators and on inspection findings. This program will be tested at eight sites beginning in June and will be extended to all plants next January. A full description of the new program is available on the NRC web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/OPA/primer.htm>.

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