

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
Region III Office of Public Affairs
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NEWS ANNOUNCEMENT: RIII-98-30 May 5, 1998
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NRC STAFF RATES PRAIRIE ISLAND "SUPERIOR" IN MAINTENANCE AND
PLANT SUPPORT AND "GOOD" IN OPERATIONS AND ENGINEERING

The Prairie Island Nuclear Power Station, operated by Northern States Power Company, has received performance ratings of "superior" in maintenance and plant support and "good" in operations and engineering in the Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff's latest Systematic Assessment of Licensee Performance (SALP) report for the facility. The plant is located in Red Wing, Minnesota.

The assessment covers the period from February 18, 1996, through March 28 of this year.

The NRC staff and Northern States Power officials will discuss the evaluation at a meeting set for 9 a.m., Tuesday, May 12, at the Prairie Island Training Center on the plant site. The meeting will be open for 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 acceptable. The report on Prairie Island gives the plant a "Category 1" rating -- indicating superior performance -- in maintenance and plant support and a "Category 2" rating -- indicating good performance -- in operations and engineering.

In notifying the utility of the SALP findings, Regional Administrator A. Bill Beach said they reflect "current overall strong performance" at the Prairie Island plant.

Mr. Beach noted that the company's performance in the plant operations area declined from the previous superior rating, but was good overall. "Procedural adherence errors and the quality of operating procedures became a concern to the NRC midway through the assessment period," he wrote. "Following the issuance of several violations and the conduct of two NRC management meetings with your staff, the NRC noted improvements

in this area."

On the other hand, Mr. Beach added, performance in the area of engineering improved and was considered very good overall. "Engineering staff provided strong support to operations, maintenance, and other organizations, and continued to identify and address technical issues," Mr. Beach continued. "Several deficiencies were identified in operations, maintenance, and test procedures due to insufficient engineering support."

Mr. Beach also said strong self-assessment efforts were noteworthy in the areas of maintenance, engineering, and plant support.

SALP Report Results:

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

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Note: SALP reports are available for review on the NRC's internet web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/OPA>.