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NRC TO HOLD WORKSHOP ON ITS NEW REACTOR INSPECTION AND ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will hold a workshop Feb. 22-24 at the Hilton Lisle in Lisle, Illinois, to discuss its revised reactor oversight program with industry representatives in preparation for the program's nationwide implementation in early April.

Since June, 13 reactors at 9 sites throughout the U.S. have participated in a six-month pilot oversight program including Quad Cities in Illinois and Prairie Island in Minnesota. NRC staff members have been assessing and modifying the new inspection program before its nationwide expansion. The three-day workshop in Lisle -- the first of a series of similar meetings which will be held in each of the NRC's four regions -- will give industry representatives at the non-pilot plants in the NRC's Region III an opportunity to become familiar with the new program. The workshop also is open to the public.

Registration will be held from 8 to 10 a.m. on the first day of the workshop, Feb. 22, at the Hilton Lisle, 3003 Corporate West Dr. There is no pre-registration. The workshop will run from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Feb. 22 and from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Feb. 23 and 24. It will feature presentations from NRC regional and headquarters staff with the first day focusing on a program overview and performance indicators, which are measurements of a plant's performance. The second day will focus on the baseline inspection program, supplemental inspections, and the significance determination process. The final day will focus again on the significance determination process, and presenters also will discuss enforcement and the assessment process under the new program.

The revised reactor oversight program takes into account improvements in the nuclear industry and the agency's need to effectively regulate the industry with existing resources and staff. Under the new program, the NRC will apply more objective and timely criteria in assessing a plant's performance, while focusing agency resources on areas that have the greatest impact on safe plant operation.

Information about the revised reactor oversight process and the pilot program is available on the Internet at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/index.html.

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