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**NRC FINDS PERFORMANCE 'ACCEPTABLE'
AT COMANCHE PEAK 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 Comanche Peak nuclear power plant, located near Glen Rose, Texas.

Officials of NRC and TU Electric, the utility which operates the plant, will discuss the review during a meeting set for Monday, March 29 at 1 p.m. in the Comanche Peak support services building training room. 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.

In a letter to TU Electric Nuclear Group Vice President C. L. Terry summarizing the review findings, NRC Branch Chief Joseph I. Tapia said, "Overall performance at Comanche Peak has continued to be acceptable. Performance in the operations area exhibited a strong safety focus and conservative decision making. The maintenance area was characterized by consistent performance and excellent plant material condition. An overall strong Maintenance Rule program has been developed."

In the engineering area, support to assure safe plant operations was good although isolated design problems posed challenges to operators during transients. Corrective actions were generally appropriate and conservative, but examples of weak troubleshooting were recently identified. Performance in the plant support area continued to be effective, Mr. Tapia said. Only core inspections will be performed during the next eight months.

The text of the plant performance review letter is available from the NRC Region IV 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 plants beginning in June and, if found acceptable, 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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