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GRAND GULF RATED 'SUPERIOR' IN THREE AREAS
'GOOD' IN ANOTHER IN LATEST NRC SYSTEMATIC ASSESSMENT REPORT

Grand Gulf Nuclear Station has received an evaluation of "Superior" in three functional areas and "Good" in the fourth in the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's latest systematic assessment of licensee performance (SALP) report.

The report was sent March 25 to Entergy Operations, Inc., which operates the plant near Port Gibson, Miss. It evaluates the plant's performance between February 27, 1994 and February 24 of this year.

NRC and Entergy officials will discuss the report during a meeting set for 9 a.m., April 18, in the Grand Gulf Energy Center Auditorium. The meeting will be open for public observation. NRC officials will be available afterward 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 which characterize performance as superior, good or adequate. The report on Grand Gulf assigns ratings of "Category 1" in operations, engineering and plant support. A "Category 2" was assigned to the maintenance area.

In his cover letter to the report, NRC Regional Administrator L. Joe Callan said, "Although the SALP scores indicate continued overall strong safety performance at the Grand Gulf Nuclear Station, declining performance was observed in the operations and maintenance areas."

"Safety performance in the area of maintenance was considered to be good, indicating a decline from its previous superior rating," the letter said. An increase in plant transients and scrams caused by undetected material failures and maintenance craft errors was the cause.

In operations, continued strong operator performance was noted during both routine operations and plant transient responses, and engineering and plant support areas continued to exhibit superior safety performance.

"The SALP Board was concerned that your self assessment and corrective action programs were not always effective at detecting and correcting declining performance in a timely manner," Callan said. However, he noted improvements toward the end of the grading period resulting from scram reduction and engineering self-assessment initiatives. Callan also praised the utility's "superior performance" in successfully implementing NRC Improved Standard Technical Specifications.

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