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NRC TO HOLD PUBLIC MEETINGS MAY 24-25 IN ILLINOIS ON CHANGES IN REACTOR OVERSIGHT AND LATEST ASSESSMENT OF DRESDEN AND BRAIDWOOD PLANTS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will hold three public meetings in Illinois to discuss, on May 24, the NRC's revised reactor oversight process and, on May 24 and 25, the latest performance review results for the Dresden and Braidwood nuclear power plants.

NRC staff members, at 7 p.m. CDT May 24, will describe the new oversight program which began at the Dresden, Braidwood and LaSalle plants last month. The meeting will be held at the Grundy County Court House, 111 E. Washington St., in Morris, Illinois. Members of the public will have the opportunity to ask questions during the meeting.

The new oversight process uses more objective, timely, and safety-significant criteria in assessing performance, while seeking to more effectively and efficiently regulate the industry. It also takes into account improvements in the performance of the nuclear industry over the past twenty years.

Under the new oversight program, inspections by NRC resident inspectors and regional office-based personnel are supplemented by statistical measures of plant activities called performance indicators. These performance indicators measure important safety aspects of plant operations, including the viability of redundant safety systems, emergency planning, radiation protection, and security measures.

Inspection findings and performance indicators for each nuclear power plant are posted on the NRC's internet web site every three months. The safety significance of each inspection finding or performance indicator is assessed with a color coding -- green, white, yellow, or red.

The NRC response to the inspection findings and performance indicators will be based on the assessment. A green finding would receive normal NRC oversight, while white, yellow, or red assessments would receive increasing NRC involvement. Multiple red findings could result in a plant shutdown.

NRC officials have scheduled a second public meeting at 1 p.m. CDT, May 24, at the Dresden Nuclear Power Plant's Training Center in Morris, Illinois, to discuss Dresden unit 2 and 3's latest plant performance review results. The Training Center is located at 6500 N. Dresden Road in Morris, Illinois.

A third public meeting to discuss Braidwood Nuclear Power Plant's latest performance review results will be held at 12:30 p.m. CDT, May 25, at the plant's Training Center, 35100 S. Route 53 in Braceville, Illinois.

A public meeting to discuss LaSalle unit 1 and 2's latest performance review results will be scheduled at a later date.

The Plant Performance Reviews (PPRs) are an interim measure the NRC has used to assess nuclear power plant safety while a revised reactor oversight process was being developed. The primary purpose of the PPRs is to evaluate safety performance information and identify any changes in plant performance so the NRC can allocate inspection resources appropriately. The text of each PPR letter, including ones on Dresden and Braidwood, is available from the NRC Office of Public Affairs and has been posted at: <http://www.nrc.gov/OPA/ppr> on the NRC web site.

Current performance information for the plants is available on the NRC web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/index.html>

A plain language summary of the new reactor oversight process is available from the NRC Office of Public Affairs or on the web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/OPA/primer.htm>.

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