



NRC NEWS

UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, REGION II

61 Forsyth Street SW, Atlanta GA 30303

Web Site: www.nrc.gov/OPA

No. II-00-47

July 5, 2000

CONTACT: Ken Clark (404)562-4416/e-mail: kmc2@nrc.gov
Roger D. Hannah (404)562-4417/e-mail: rdh1@nrc.gov

NRC SCHEDULES MEETING WITH SOUTHERN NUCLEAR OPERATING COMPANY TO DISCUSS PERFORMANCE AT FARLEY NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission has scheduled a meeting with Southern Nuclear Operating Company July 11 to discuss two white performance indicators in the Farley Unit 2 mitigating systems cornerstone for the second quarter of calendar year 2000.

The meeting is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. (CDT) in the Farley Nuclear Plant Visitors Center Auditorium at the plant site near Columbia, Alabama. The meeting is open to observation by the public and media, and NRC officials will be available at its conclusion to answer questions from those who attend.

Under the NRC's new reactor oversight process, which went into effect at all U.S. commercial nuclear power plants in April, plants report 18 different performance indicators on a quarterly basis. Those performance indicators are statistical measures of plant activities and are grouped under categories called safety cornerstones.

The NRC process characterizes the safety significance of each performance indicator by a color -- green, white, yellow, or red. A green performance indicator receives normal NRC oversight, while white, yellow, or red assessments receive increasing NRC involvement. The Farley plant's Unit 2 already had one white system availability performance indicator under the mitigating systems cornerstone, and the data for the second quarter indicates that there will be another when the performance indicators for that period are finalized. The two systems identified in the performance indicators are the emergency AC power supply for both units at the plant and the auxiliary feedwater system for Unit 2 only. The systems were classified as unavailable after the plant staff found problems during scheduled tests.

The process states that when a plant has a degraded cornerstone (two white inputs or one yellow input in the same cornerstone), the NRC will hold a public meeting with plant management, conduct additional inspections focused on the cause of the degraded performance and oversee the plant staff's self-assessment of the issues. Although this level of performance does call for additional NRC attention, the cornerstone objectives are being met and there is only a minimal reduction in the safety margin for the plant.