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NRC TO MEET WITH FIRSTENERGY OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS SAFETY PERFORMANCE AT PERRY NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with FirstEnergy officials on Thursday, March 27, to discuss the results of NRC's annual assessment of safety performance at the Perry nuclear power plant in Perry, Ohio.

The meeting will be held at 5 p.m. in Room 6 of the Tarbuck Center, 4325 Manchester Avenue. The public is invited to observe the meeting, and NRC officials will be available before the conclusion of the meeting to answer any questions.

A letter from the NRC to FirstEnergy addresses plant safety performance during the previous year and forms the basis for the meeting discussions. The letter is available from Region III Public Affairs Office and on the NRC web site at:

<http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/listofasmrpt.html>

According to the letter, overall, Perry operated in a manner that preserved public health and safety. There was one finding of low to moderate safety significance in the last quarter of 2002, which resulted from the failure of the high pressure core spray pump to start during testing in October 2002. This occurred because the licensee didn't follow proper procedures during the installation and inspection of a circuit breaker in 1994. The improper installation led to the degradation of the electrical connection, resulting in the pump's failure to start. The inspection report is on the NRC web site at:

<http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html>

The letter states that in addition to baseline inspection, as a result of this finding, the NRC will conduct a supplemental inspection to make sure the licensee has properly addressed all the issues associated with it.

In addition, the letter notes: "As you are aware, since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the NRC has issued several Orders and threat advisories to enhance security capabilities and improve guard force readiness. We have conducted inspections to review your implementation of these requirements and have monitored your actions in response to changing threat advisories. For calendar Year 2003, we plan to continue these inspections and conduct portions of the security baseline inspection

program, as well as perform additional inspections to evaluate your compliance with new requirements that may be ordered."

Current performance information for Perry is available on the NRC web site at:

http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/PERR1perr1_chart.htm

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