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NRC TO MEET WITH NUCLEAR MANAGEMENT COMPANY TO DISCUSS RESULTS OF SPECIAL INSPECTION AT POINT BEACH

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of Nuclear Management Company on December 16 to discuss the results of a special NRC inspection which reviewed plant performance at the Point Beach Nuclear Plant. The two-reactor facility is located near Two Rivers, Wisconsin.

The meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. at the Holiday Inn, 4601 Calumet Avenue, in Manitowoc, Wisconsin.

The special inspection, which began in July, resulted from the NRC's determination that the possible failure of an auxiliary cooling water system at the plant was of "high safety significance." Normal plant operations were not affected by the problem, which was initially discovered by plant personnel in 2001 and subsequently corrected.

The auxiliary cooling water system is used to maintain the reactor in a safe condition if problems occur during plant operations and to continue removing heat from the reactor after a shutdown.

The special inspection focused on three areas: (1) the corrective action program - how the utility finds and corrects problems; (2) the emergency preparedness program - how the utility would respond to an emergency at the plant; and (3) a broad review of the plant's engineering, operations, and maintenance programs.

Even though the utility discovered the problem with the auxiliary cooling water system and took action to address the problem, the special inspection was tasked with looking more broadly at principal aspects of plant operations to identify other possible performance problems. The NRC Reactor Oversight Process calls for such an inspection when there are problems of "high safety significance."

NRC inspection findings are evaluated using a four-level scale of safety significance, ranging from "green" for a finding of very low significance, through "white" and "yellow" to "red," for a finding of high safety significance. The 2001 auxiliary cooling water system problem was determined to be a "red" finding.

The report of the team's findings will be publicly available from the Region III Office of Public Affairs and on the NRC's web site: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html>. Assistance in using the web reading room is available by calling the NRC Public Document Room at 800-397-4209.

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