



NRC NEWS

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

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Web Site: www.nrc.gov

No. II-04-027

April 9, 2004

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NRC TO MEET WITH DUKE ENERGY OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS SAFETY PERFORMANCE AT OCONEE NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with Duke Energy officials on Tuesday, April 13, to discuss the results of NRC's annual assessment of safety performance at the Oconee nuclear power plant near Seneca, South Carolina.

The meeting will be held at 1:00 p.m in the Auditorium of the Complex Building at the Oconee Nuclear Station, located at 155 East Pickens Highway (Highway 183) near Seneca. The public is invited to observe the meeting, and NRC officials will be available before the conclusion of the meeting to answer any questions.

The NRC said that all three Oconee reactors were operated safely during the evaluation period from January 1 through December 31, 2003. As a result, Units 1 and 2 will undergo only routine, scheduled inspections during 2004, but Unit 3 will undergo a supplemental inspection in addition to those done normally. The Unit 3 supplemental inspection is due to problems of low to moderate safety significance involving inadequate installation of electrical connectors on an emergency power supply cable and pressurizer heat losses in excess of regulatory requirements. A letter from the NRC to Duke Energy outlining the results of the most recent evaluation is available from Region II Public Affairs and on the NRC web site at www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/oco_2003q4.pdf.

The NRC staff will also conduct inspections at Oconee (not specifically related to the plant's prior performance) related to planned reactor vessel head and steam generator replacements, operator licensing examinations, the dry cask spent fuel storage installation and safety issues concerning reactor pressure vessel lower head penetration nozzles.

The agency will also continue to monitor plant actions in response to any new security orders and any newly developed portions of the plant security program.

Current performance indicators for the three units at the Oconee plant are available at www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/OCO1/oco1_chart.html, www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/OCO2/oco2_chart.html and www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/OCO3/oco3_chart.html.

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