Davis-Besse Nuclear Power Station
NRC UPDATE

December 2004

First round of independent assessments nearing end

FirstEnergy is completing the last of four independent assessments required by a Confirmatory Order, issued by the NRC to FirstEnergy as part of its authorization to resume operations at Davis-Besse. The Order requires the utility to conduct independent assessments of four key areas at the plant: operations performance, corrective action program, engineering program effectiveness, and organizational safety culture, including a safety conscious work environment.

These assessments are to be conducted each year for a five-year period.

The reports of the operations performance assessment and the corrective action program assessment have been issued and the engineering assessment report is expected to be issued in mid-December.

The organizational safety culture assessment is underway with a report due to be available to the public in late February.

FirstEnergy Revises Emergency Siren Data

Following an NRC inspection in October, FirstEnergy revised the data on emergency siren performance for the second quarter of 2004 which it had previously submitted to the NRC.

On May 7 the sirens failed to operate during a test as a result of a computer problem. Subsequent to the siren failures, FirstEnergy increased the frequency of testing from monthly to each work day. With the increased testing, the data submitted to the NRC as a performance indicator showed that indicator to be "green." Without the increased testing, the performance indicator would have been "white," which triggers additional regulatory oversight from the NRC.

Following its review of the FirstEnergy data, the NRC determined it to be "discrepant" and conducted a special inspection to evaluate the testing data and its

NRC Resident Inspection Staff

Three fully qualified resident inspectors are assigned to the Davis-Besse site on a full-time basis. The normal complement for a reactor site is two inspectors, but a third inspector was added in September 2003 to provide additional oversight. All three inspectors and their families live in the vicinity of the Davis-Besse plant.

Christopher S. "Scott" Thomas has been the senior resident inspector at Davis-Besse since January 2002. He previously was a resident inspector at the Prairie Island Nuclear Power Station in Minnesota. Scott specialized in nuclear engineering with the U.S. Navy for 15 years before joining the NRC. He holds a master's degree in environmental engineering.

John E. "Jack" Rutkowski was assigned as a resident inspector at Davis-Besse in June 2003. Prior to joining the NRC in 2002, Jack held a wide range of technical and management positions in the nuclear industry. He also served in the U.S. Navy. He holds a master's degree in nuclear science and engineering and a master's degree in business administration.

Monica P. Salter-Williams became the third member of the resident inspection staff in September 2003, coming to Davis-Besse from the NRC's Region I office. She was previously an engineer at a nuclear power plant in Pennsylvania. Monica has a master's degree in nuclear engineering from Pennsylvania State University and a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Georgia State University. She recently gave birth to her second child.

Nancy Keller is the resident office assistant. She has been the administrative backbone of the NRC resident inspectors' office since 1994.

handling by FirstEnergy. The inspection findings are still under review, and the report is expected to be released later this month.

On November 4, following the inspection, FirstEnergy submitted corrected performance indicator data which no longer includes the daily test results. The daily tests had been initiated from the utility's Emergency Operations Facility which does not meet the requirements for conducting the tests since it is not staffed around the clock. The corrected data will result in the performance indicator being shown as "white."

Steven Reynolds replacing Jack Grobe as Panel Chairman

Jack Grobe, who has served as the chairman of the NRC Davis-Besse Oversight Panel since it was formed in April 2002, will be filling a new position in the agency and will be leaving the panel at the end of the year. Steven Reynolds, who is acting Director of the Division of Reactor Projects in NRC Region III, will be assuming the role of chairman, replacing Grobe.

The panel coordinates the NRC's regulatory activities for Davis-Besse. The panel held public meetings monthly in the Oak Harbor area during the Davis-Besse shutdown and startup phase and continues to hold public meetings approximately bimonthly to review the status of plant operations and continuing improvement programs.

William Ruland, Director of Projects Directorate III in the NRC's Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation (NRR), remains as Vice Chairman of the panel. Other panel members include Christine Lipa, the Region III branch chief overseeing inspection activities at Davis-Besse; NRC Davis-Besse Senior Resident Inspector Scott Thomas; Region III engineering branch chief Ann Marie Stone; Gene Suh, NRR supervisor for Davis-Besse; and Jon Hopkins, NRR project manager for Davis-Besse; and David Passehl, a reactor engineer in the Regon III office.

Davis-Besse Documents Remain Available on NRC Web Site

The NRC online document library, known as ADAMS, has been removed from the agency's web site while its files are reviewed for security-related information. The documents concerning reactor facilities are expected to be available on the web site soon while documents related to nuclear materials licenses will be restored later.

Davis-Besse documents, however, continue to be available. Recent documents, including NRC inspection reports, on the Davis-Besse news and correspondence page which were previously linked to the ADAMS system have been replaced with files in Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) format. To view these documents online, go to the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov - then select Davis-Besse Reactor Vessel Head Degradation from the 'Key Topics' menu. Then select the News and Correspondence page.

NRC Issues Inspection Reports

Integrated Resident Inspection (Report No. 50-346/04-12, issued September 27, 2004) reviewed the results of seven weeks of inspection by the NRC resident inspectors. No significant findings were identified.

Triennial Fire Protection Baseline Inspection (Report No. 50-346/04-09, issued November 15, 2004) evaluated Davis-Besse's fire protection programs, fire protection features, post-fire safe shutdown capabilities and plant layout. The goal of the inspection was to make sure that fire protection programs and physical measures at the plant are adequate to minimize the impact of a fire on the plant's safety equipment. No significant findings requiring further NRC action were identified.

Management and Human Performance Inspection (Report No. 50-346/04-13, issued October 17, 2004) evaluated the effectiveness of plant's management and human performance corrective actions developed from its assessment of the November 2003 Safety Conscious Work Environment (SCWE) survey. The inspection

focused on the effectiveness of corrective actions put in place after the utility identified an increase in negative responses from the same survey in March 2003 and the utility's assessment of the effectiveness of its corrective actions. In addition, the NRC team reviewed the quarterly safety culture monitoring business practice and its implementation, the implementation of the Teamwork, Ownership, and Pride Team and continued observation of the Safety Conscious Work Environment Review Team meetings. Inspectors concluded that, in general, corrective actions at the plant were effective with the following exceptions: The practice of bringing senior managers together to discuss common issues was not effective because the rating criteria used was not consistently applied or understood; the Safety Conscious Work Environment Review Team underestimated the scope of a potential problem in its review of a particular issue; Teamwork, Ownership, Pride team was not being implemented as intended and could not positively impact the site's SCWE in its current state; the change management process was not effective because many employees were not aware of the timing or the process used at the station to select individuals for specific positions; and no mechanism for assessing communications efforts at the plant was established.

Integrated Resident Inspection (Report No. 50-346/04-14, issued November 8, 2004) reviewed the results of seven weeks of inspection by the NRC resident inspectors. No significant findings requiring further NRC action were identified.

NRC Inspection Reports Being Prepared

Integrated Resident Inspection reviews the results of seven weeks of inspection by the NRC resident inspectors. The report will be issued in January 2005.

Follow-up of Discrepant Alert And Notification System Performance Indicator (PI) Inspection reviewed the utility's activities in response to the testing failure of the Alert and Notification System, especially with respect to the reporting requirements of the performance indicator program.

Public Participation in the Process

The NRC's experience is that members of the public, including public officials and citizens, often raise questions or provide insights that are important to consider. If you have questions or want to provide information or a point of view, please contact us. For feedback on this newsletter, contact Viktoria Mitlyng 630/829-9662 or Jan Strasma 630/829-9663 (toll free 800/522-3025 - ext -9662 or -9663). E-mail: opa3@nrc.gov. Extensive information about the Davis-Besse reactor vessel head damage and the ensuing activities is available on the NRC web site: http://www.nrc.gov - select "Davis-Besse" under the list of key topics.