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NRC TO HOLD MEETINGS ON VERMONT YANKEE NUCLEAR PLANT PERFORMANCE AND POWER UPRATE REVIEW

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of Entergy Nuclear on Wednesday, March 31, to discuss the results of the agency's annual assessment of safety performance at the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant. Agency staff will also discuss, in a subsequent separate meeting with the public, its review of a power uprate application for the plant, which is operated by Entergy Nuclear and located in Vernon, Vt.

The annual assessment meeting, which will be open to the public for observation, is scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. at the Vernon Elementary School, 381 Governor Hunt Road in Vernon. NRC staff will discuss plant performance for the period from January 1 to December 31, 2003, as well as provide a brief overview of agency's Reactor Oversight Process. Before the session is adjourned, the staff will be available to answer questions from the public on plant performance issues.

Following the assessment meeting and a short break, the NRC will meet with the public at approximately 8 p.m. to discuss the status of the agency's review of Entergy Nuclear's request for a power uprate at Vermont Yankee. The NRC's review of that request is still in the early stages. NRC staff will start this meeting with a brief presentation describing the agency's review of power uprate applications. Afterwards, the staff will answer questions related to NRC's power uprate review process.

With regard to the NRC's annual assessment of Vermont Yankee, the agency found that overall, the plant operated safely and met all cornerstone objectives during the period. (Cornerstones are measures of plant performance.) A letter sent from the NRC Region I Office to plant officials addresses the performance of the plant during the period and will serve as the basis for the meeting discussion. It is available on the NRC web site at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/vy_2003q4.pdf.

On the topic of security issues, the NRC has issued several orders and threat advisories to enhance security capabilities and improve guard force readiness since the terrorist attacks on

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September 11, 2001. The agency has also conducted inspections to review the implementation of these requirements and has monitored the action of plant operators in response to changing threat conditions. The NRC will continue security inspections in 2004.

Current performance information for Vermont Yankee is available on the NRC web site at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/VY/vy_chart.html .

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