



NRC NEWS

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

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NRC TO DISCUSS 2006 PERFORMANCE AT FARLEY NUCLEAR PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff is scheduled to meet with Southern Nuclear Operating Company officials on Tuesday, April 3, to discuss the NRC's annual assessment of safety performance for 2006 at the Farley nuclear power plant, located near Columbia, Ala.

The meeting, which is open to the public, is scheduled to begin at 5:00 p.m. in the Houston County Administration Building in Dothan. The NRC staff will present the results of the assessment and be available to respond to questions or comments from the public before the close of the meeting.

"The NRC continually reviews the performance of the Farley plant and the nation's other commercial nuclear power facilities," NRC Region II Administrator William Travers said. "This meeting is a chance for us to discuss that safety performance with the company, with local officials and with people living near the plant."

A letter sent from the NRC Region II 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/far_2006q4.pdf.

The NRC uses color-coded inspection findings and performance indicators to assess nuclear plant performance. The colors start with "green" and then increase to "white," "yellow" or "red," depending on the safety significance of the issues involved.

The NRC said the Farley plant operated safely during 2006 with inspection findings being "green," or very low safety significance, and performance indicators also indicating performance at levels requiring no additional NRC oversight during the first, second and fourth quarters of the year. However, during the third quarter, the Mitigating Systems Performance Indicator for Cooling Water crossed the white threshold. The performance indicator did return to green in the fourth quarter as the plant staff took several steps to address the concern, and a supplemental NRC inspection is further evaluating the issue.

As a result of the plant's overall performance, the NRC plans to conduct only routine baseline inspections at the plant for the rest of 2007. The NRC staff will also conduct several non-routine inspections, including the independent spent fuel storage installation, containment emergency recirculation sump modifications and initial reactor operator licensing exams.

Routine inspections are performed by NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by specialists from the Region II Office in Atlanta, and the agency's headquarters in Rockville, Md.

Current information for the Farley plant is available on the NRC web site at:

www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/FAR1/far1_chart.html and
www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/FAR2/far2_chart.html .

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