



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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No. III-07-010

March 29, 2007

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NRC TO DISCUSS 2006 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FOR DUANE ARNOLD ENERGY CENTER

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of Florida Power and Light on Thursday, April 5, to discuss the agency's assessment of safety performance for last year at the Duane Arnold Energy Center. The plant is located at Palo, Iowa.

The meeting, which will be open to the public, is scheduled to begin at 1 p.m. at the Palo Community Center, 1006 First Street, Palo. 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 public may also participate in the meeting through a telephone conference call. For instructions on how to participate, interested persons should contact Bruce Burgess at 630/829-9629.

"The NRC continually reviews the performance of the Duane Arnold plant and the nation's other commercial nuclear power facilities," NRC Region III Administrator James Caldwell said. "This meeting will provide an opportunity for a discussion of our annual assessment of safety performance with the company and with local officials and residents who live near the plant. Our goal is to explain the NRC oversight process and make as much information as possible available to the public regarding our regulation of these facilities."

A letter sent from the NRC Region III 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: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/duan_2006q4.pdf.

The NRC's assessment concluded that the Duane Arnold plant operated safely during the period. 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," commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved.

All of the inspection findings and performance indicators for Duane Arnold during 2006 were determined to be "green."

As a result of this performance, the NRC plans to conduct the normal, baseline level of inspections during the upcoming year.

However, the NRC is in the process of reviewing a preliminary “white” inspection finding in the area of emergency preparedness. The NRC’s final determination of the safety significance of this finding may result in additional inspections.

On May 1, 2006, the NRC issued two notices of violation to the plant for willful violations of plant procedures. The utility has taken sufficient corrective action to address these problems.

Routine inspections are performed by two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the Region III Office in Lisle, Ill., and the agency’s headquarters in Rockville, Md. Among the areas of plant operations to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are radioactive material processing and transportation; operation of an independent spent fuel storage installation; and access control to radiologically significant areas.

Current performance information for Duane Arnold is available on the NRC’s web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/DUAN/duan_chart.html.

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