



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO DISCUSS 2006 PERFORMANCE AT VOGTLE NUCLEAR PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff is scheduled to meet with Southern Nuclear Operating Company officials on Wednesday, April 11, to discuss the NRC's annual assessment of safety performance for 2006 at the Vogtle nuclear power plant, located near Waynesboro, Ga.

The meeting, which is open to the public, is scheduled to begin at 1:00 p.m. in the Burke County Commission Meeting Room in the Burke County Courthouse in Waynesboro. 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 Vogtle 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/vog_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 Vogtle plant operated safely during 2006, but performance during the most recent quarter was in the NRC's regulatory response column based on a "white" inspection finding in emergency preparedness and the Unit 2 Mitigating Systems Performance Indicator for Cooling Water crossing the white threshold during the third quarter of 2006. Both issues are of low to moderate safety significance and the NRC will conduct supplemental inspections in those areas this year.

In addition to those inspections and the NRC's routine baseline inspections, NRC inspectors will also be looking at the reactor vessel head and head penetrations, Unit 2 containment emergency sump modifications and license renewal activities. The NRC staff will also conduct initial reactor operator licensing exams at the Vogtle plant this year.

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 Vogtle plant is available on the NRC web site at:
www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/VOG1/vog1_chart.html and
www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/VOG2/vog2_chart.html.

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