



NRC NEWS

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

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NRC TO DISCUSS 2006 PERFORMANCE AT OCONEE NUCLEAR PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff is scheduled to meet with Duke Energy officials on Thursday, April 12, to discuss the NRC's annual assessment of safety performance for 2006 at the Oconee nuclear power plant, located near Seneca, S.C.

The meeting, which is open to the public, is scheduled to begin at 10:00 a.m. in the Oconee Office Complex Auditorium, 155 East Pickens Highway (Highway 183) outside Seneca. 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 Oconee 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/oco_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 Oconee plant operated safely during 2006, but performance during the most recent quarter was in the NRC's degraded cornerstone column based on a "white" performance indicator in conjunction with a "white" inspection finding in the same area. The details are available in the letter mentioned above. In response to the degraded cornerstone performance at the plant, the NRC plans a supplemental inspection to look into those issues.

In addition to that inspections and the NRC's routine baseline inspections, NRC inspectors will also be looking at the plant's independent spent fuel storage facility and Duke's actions related to a temporary instruction for containment sump blockage. The NRC staff will also conduct reactor operator licensing exams at the Oconee 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 Oconee plant is available on the NRC web site at:

www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/OCO1/oco1_chart.html ,
www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/OCO2/oco2_chart.html and
www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/OCO3/oco3_chart.html .

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