



NRC NEWS

U. S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC TO DISCUSS 2006 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FOR RIVER BEND NUCLEAR PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet in St. Francisville, La., on April 23, with representatives of Entergy Operations, Inc., to discuss the agency's assessment of safety performance for last year at the River Bend Station nuclear plant near Baton Rouge, La.

The meeting, which will be open to the public, is scheduled to begin at 6 p.m. at the River Bend Station Training Center Auditorium, 5485 U.S. Highway 61N, St. Francisville.

In addition to the performance assessment, the NRC staff will be available to answer questions from the public on the safety performance of River Bend Station, as well as the NRC's role in ensuring safe plant operation.

"The NRC continually reviews the performance of River Bend Station and the nation's other commercial nuclear power facilities," NRC Region IV Administrator Bruce S. Mallett 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."

A letter sent from the NRC Region IV office to plant officials addresses the performance of the plant during 2006 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/rbs_2006q4.pdf.

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

The NRC said River Bend Station operated safely during 2006, but identified 16 “green” violations in the area of human performance during the assessment period. In order to address this substantive cross-cutting issue, the licensee has implemented an improvement plan, but it has not yet proven fully effective. NRC will continue to focus attention on this area as part of its baseline inspections during 2007.

The NRC is also looking at the cross-cutting area of problem identification and resolution, where previous violations were identified. The licensee has implemented an improvement program, but NRC will continue to focus attention on this area to verify that performance improvements are sustained.

Routine inspections are performed by two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant and by inspection specialists from the Region IV Office in Arlington, Texas. Among the areas of plant performance to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are activities associated with engineering, fire protection, emergency preparedness, maintenance and radiological controls.

Current performance information for River Bend Station is available on the NRC web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/RBS1/rbs1_chart.html .

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