



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO DISCUSS 2007 PERFORMANCE OF HATCH NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has scheduled a meeting for Wednesday, April 9, with representatives of Southern Nuclear Operating Company to discuss the agency's assessment of safety performance during 2007 at the Hatch Nuclear Power Plant. The plant, operated by Southern Nuclear, is in south Georgia 11 miles north of the town of Baxley.

The meeting, which will be open to the public, is scheduled to begin at 6:30 p.m. in the Appling County Commissioners Meeting Room, 69 Tippins Street in Baxley.

After the formal presentation, NRC staff will be available to answer questions from the public on the safety performance of Hatch, as well as the NRC's role in ensuring safe plant operation.

"The NRC continually inspects and reviews the performance of Hatch and all commercial nuclear plants, issuing inspection reports throughout the year and an overall assessment at year's end," NRC Region II Administrator Victor McCree said. "This meeting is an opportunity to discuss that annual assessment with the company, local officials and people near the plant, and to answer any questions they may have."

The NRC said the Hatch plant operated safely during the 2007 assessment period, from Jan. 1 through Dec. 31, with Unit 1 having all inspection findings of very low safety significance and all performance indicators indicating performance at levels requiring no additional NRC oversight. As a result, the NRC plans to conduct routine baseline inspections on Unit 1 during 2008.

Plant performance for Hatch Unit 2 was in the Regulatory Response column of the NRC's Action Matrix for the final three quarters of 2007 due to a high pressure injection system performance indicator crossing the threshold from "green" to "white" in the second quarter of 2007. When assessing nuclear plant performance, the NRC uses color-coded performance indicators and inspection findings. The colors start with "green" and then increase to "white," "yellow" or "red," commensurate with the safety significance of the issues involved. A supplemental NRC inspection was conducted in early March to review the actions taken by the plant to address the "white" performance indicator.

A letter sent from the NRC Region II office to plant officials addresses the performance of the plant during 2007 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/hat_2007q4.pdf .

Current performance information for the two units at the Hatch plant is available on the NRC web site at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/HAT1/hat1_chart.html and www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/HAT2/hat2_chart.html .

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