



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO DISCUSS 2007 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FOR BYRON NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of Exelon Generation Company Thursday, April 24, to discuss the agency's assessment of safety performance for last year at the Byron Nuclear Power Plant. The two-unit plant is located in Byron, Ill.

The meeting, which will be open to the public, is scheduled to begin at 6 p.m. CDT at the Byron Training Center, Room 107, 4448 N. German Church, in Byron. The NRC staff will present the results of the assessment, talk about the NRC and its range of activities, 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 Byron plant and the nation's other commercial nuclear power facilities," NRC Region III Administrator James Caldwell said. "This meeting allows us to discuss our annual assessment of safety performance with the company and with local officials and area residents. Our goal is to explain how the NRC works and make sure as much information as possible is available on 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/listofasmrpt.html>.

The NRC's assessment concluded that both units of the Byron 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.

The NRC letter to the utility stated that, during 2007, all of the inspection findings and performance indicators were determined to be "green" for Byron, Unit 1. For Unit 2, there was one "white" performance indicator, meaning it had a low to medium significance to safety. The

performance indicator was associated with the availability and operability of heat removal systems. In February 2007, the NRC completed a follow-up inspection which focused on assessing the utility's understanding of the issue and the corrective actions to address it. The inspection did not identify any major findings.

The letter also mentioned a problem with essential service water piping that was still under the NRC's review when the letter to the utility was issued. In April of this year, the NRC determined that the degradation of a portion of the essential service water system piping was a "white" finding, meaning it had a low to medium significance to safety. As a result of the "white" finding, the NRC will perform a supplemental inspection focusing on this issue in addition to the normal, baseline level of inspections for the rest of this year.

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. Among the areas of plant operations to be inspected this year by NRC specialists are emergency preparedness, radiation protection, and reactor system operations.

Current performance information for Byron is available on the NRC's web site at: http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/BYRO1/byro1_chart.html Unit 1 and http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/BYRO2/byro2_chart.html Unit 2.

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