



# NRC NEWS

**U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**  
Office of Public Affairs Telephone: 301/415-8200  
Washington, D.C. 20555-0001  
E-mail: [opa@nrc.gov](mailto:opa@nrc.gov)  
Site: <http://www.nrc.gov>

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**Dr. Peter B. Lyons**  
**Commissioner, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission**  
**At the Presentation of the**  
**NRC Model of the Davis-Besse Nuclear Plant**  
**Reactor Vessel Head Degradation**  
**September 8, 2008**

Good morning and thank you for taking a few minutes from your busy schedules to be here today. The thoughts that I want to share with you today will be brief, but I assure you they are deeply felt, and I appreciate your interest in them.

Like many other organizations, we memorialize our successes and hold forth our highest aspirations as reminders of what we are working *toward* – first among these being our mission and our values. However, we should also be ready to memorialize a weakness or a stumble as a reminder of the ever-present need to avoid the subtle complacency that may result from a long history of success. Today we dedicate such a memorial – one that I hope will continue to remind both our staff and our licensees not only of the vulnerability of technology to degradation, but also the vulnerability of people to complacency.

Since the beginning of the atomic age, our nation entrusted a solemn duty to our regulatory predecessors and now to us, for the protection of public health and safety and our environment. Overall, we have succeeded in this duty -- succeeded because this trust has been placed in a regulatory organization composed of people, like you, who believe public service is one of the highest of callings, and one that demands our best personal efforts and commitment, every day. The integrity of the materials and activities that we license and oversee depends on *our* personal integrity as committed public servants.

Our integrity as regulators must guide our daily actions. Those actions must be founded upon a never-ending cycle of questioning, listening, and judging. To stop this cycle would be the first step toward complacency. As regulators we serve the public best when our questions are probing, when we fully hear and comprehend the answers that are provided, and when our

judgments are fair, objective, and technically sound. Underlying all of our actions must be a deeply abiding respectfulness – internally among ourselves, externally toward our licensees and the public, and above all toward the technologies that we regulate.

Finally, we must be prepared to unflinchingly expose the truth, even when it hurts, and especially when we can learn from it. I believe former NRC Chairman Nils Diaz once summed it up very appropriately when he said “Regulation... does not rejoice in what is wrong, but rejoices with the truth.”

It is my fervent hope and high expectation that this model and display will remind us and those who follow us, licensee and regulator alike, that we must never stop questioning, never stop listening and comprehending, and never stop judging. We must constantly guard against complacency. Our nation expects no less.

Thank you.