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ENGINEERING

Department of Nuclear Engineering



November 9, 2009

Mr. Paul V. Doyle Jr., Project Manager
Research and Test Reactors Branch A
Division of Policy and Rulemaking
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Subject: Response to "Request for Additional Information Regarding The Texas A&M
University AGN-201M Reactor (TAC No. ME 1590)"

Dear Mr. Doyle,

I have reviewed your request (dated October 9, 2009) related to the renewal of a Facility Operating License No. R-23 for our AGN Model 201M Serial No. 106 research reactor. I have also consulted with Dr. Dan Reece, who is our Interim Reactor Supervisor for the AGN (in addition to his ongoing duties as Director of the Nuclear Science Center). Recently, he has responded to Mr. William Schuster on an RAI for both the NSC TRIGA reactor, as well as for the AGN. I am attaching his response to this letter. In this correspondence he mentions the impact of continuing staffing issues on our collective ability to meet expeditious response schedules for either/both of these reactors. I add the following three observations:

- We have found a significant amount of outdated information that needs to be replaced and updated from the original license renewal documentation that was originally filed in 1997.
- We have made significant security upgrades to the AGN facility, funded by DOE's GTRI program, that need to be appropriately reflected in the body of required documentation.
- We have been without a permanent reactor supervisor for the AGN and our ability to "borrow" personnel resources from the Nuclear Science Center has been somewhat limited due to the overall staff shortage at the NSC (Ref: attached letter from Dan Reece). However, just this week we have filled the position and our permanent Reactor Supervisor, Mr. Chris Crouch, will begin work on November 16, 2009.

Correspondingly, we respectfully request an extension of time over which we could satisfactorily update and supplement the information which you have requested in support of license renewal. It is my understanding from the e-mail exchanges, that you or your staff may be visiting Texas A&M for a facility familiarization trip in the February timeframe. Our goal would be to complete the update of the entire body of information identified in your RAI in time for that visit and to perhaps use the opportunity to review the material with you prior to a formal submission. I believe that with the hiring of a dedicated Reactor Supervisor for the AGN, our ability to meet planned schedules will be considerably improved.

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With the addition of digital instrumentation and control to the AGN, as well as other facility and security enhancements, and now the hiring of a Reactor Supervisor, we are looking forward to the start-up of the AGN as a very valuable enhancement to our nuclear engineering education infrastructure. We look forward to your favorable consideration of this request.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 979-862-1956. Of course, on more detailed technical matters, please continue to communicate with Dr. Reece on the AGN until we have completed the transition to the new Reactor Supervisor.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ray J. Juzaitis', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Raymond J. Juzaitis, PhD
Department Head, Nuclear Engineering

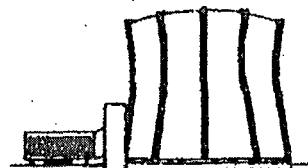
Attachment: As stated

cc: Mr. William Schuster, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Dr. Warren D. Reece, Interim AGN Reactor Supervisor, Nuclear Engineering, Texas A&M
Ms. Amy B. Caldwell, Academic Business Coordinator, Nuclear Engineering, Texas A&M

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August 27, 2009

Mr. William Schuster
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
11555 Rockville Pike, MS 12 D3
Rockville, MD 20852

2009-0033

Subject: Response to RAI

Dear Mr. Schuster:

As you know, we have lost several key personnel here at the Nuclear Science Center. Fortunately, we have submitted the new SAR and I believe that it is in good form so that the RAI questions, hopefully, should be few. Besides loss of personnel, we are doing a major upgrade of the security system here at the NSC and at the AGN reactor on campus as part of the GTRI efforts. While this is a wonderful improvement, it will stretch us even thinner. Therefore I'm asking for your patience and forbearance with us on responses to RAI both for the NSC and for the AGN. I am exploring what options I have to quickly hire more people, which I will, but it will still be six months or so before they are trained enough to be helpful. As for the AGN we are interviewing for a reactor supervisor now, but here, too, there will be a training period before I can pass much to them.

As always I appreciate your help. If you have any questions, please contact me at 979-845-7551.

Sincerely,

Warren D. Reece
Director, NSC

Xc: 2.11/central file