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NRC Schedules Meeting May 13 to Discuss Prairie Island Nuclear Power Plant

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will hold two public meetings on May 13 to discuss the Prairie Island nuclear power plant. One meeting will encompass the plant's improvement plan for its corrective action program and the second will be an open house to discuss the agency's annual assessment of safety performance for Prairie Island. The two-unit plant is operated by Northern States Power Co.-Minnesota, and is located in Welch, Minn., about 28 miles southeast of Minneapolis.

Both meetings will take place at the St. James Hotel, 406 Main St., Summit Room, in Red Wing, Minn. The meeting to discuss the facility's corrective action program will begin at 6 p.m. and the open house will follow. The public will be able to observe the business meeting between the NRC and plant officials and participate in the question and comment period once the business portion has concluded. During the open house, attendees will be able to discuss with NRC staff the plant's 2014 performance and the agency's oversight of the facility.

Overall, the Prairie Island facility operated safely in 2014. All performance indicators and inspection findings for Unit 1 were green, or low safety significance, and the unit remained in Column 1 of the action matrix. Unit 2 had no safety significant findings; however, the unit was in Column 2 for all four quarters of 2014. This was due to one white or low to moderate performance indicator in the area of mitigating systems. Mitigating systems are made up of key pieces of equipment and specific systems that must be available and reliable when needed. After conducting a supplemental inspection, the NRC found the plant had addressed the issues and placed Unit 2 back in Column 1. As a result, unit 1 and 2 will continue to receive the NRC's normal level of oversight during 2015.

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. Performance indicators are statistical measurements of plant and equipment performance. The NRC's action matrix reflects overall plant performance and agency response. There are five columns in the matrix with Column 1 requiring a baseline level of inspections. A move to the other columns results in an increased level of NRC oversight and inspections.

Inspections are performed by two NRC Resident Inspectors assigned to the plant, inspection specialists from the Region III Office in Lisle, Ill., and specialists from the agency's headquarters in

Rockville, Md. Among the areas of performance to be inspected this year by NRC inspectors are activities associated with radiological safety, steam generator replacement, and license renewal.

The [annual assessment letter](#) sent from the NRC Region III office to the company and the most current performance information for Prairie Island [Unit 1](#) and [Unit 2](#) are available on the NRC website.