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NRC Begins Special Inspection at River Bend Station

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has begun a special inspection at the River Bend Station nuclear power plant to review circumstances surrounding events that occurred following an unplanned reactor shutdown on Jan. 9. The plant, operated by Entergy Operations, Inc., is located in St. Francisville, La.

The plant was operating at full power when a lightning strike caused a momentary surge in the plant's offsite power supply, triggering an unplanned shutdown. Operators subsequently took appropriate actions to place the plant in a safe shutdown condition. The following day, operational errors led to a one hour loss of shutdown cooling.

“The purpose of this special inspection is to better understand the circumstances surrounding the loss of shutdown cooling, determine if operator response was appropriate, and review the licensee's corrective actions to ensure that the cause of the event, including associated equipment problems and any contributing operator actions have been effectively addressed,” NRC Region IV Administrator Marc Dapas said.

Several NRC inspectors will spend about a week on site evaluating the licensee's root cause analysis, maintenance of some plant systems and adequacy of corrective actions. An inspection report documenting the team's findings will be publicly available within 45 days of the end of the inspection.