

No: III-16-007

May 10, 2016

CONTACT: Viktoria Mitlyng 630-829-9662
Prema Chandrathil 630-829-9663

NRC Schedules an Open House May 18 to Discuss 2015 Performance of Prairie Island Nuclear Plant

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will hold an open house May 18 in Red Wing, Minn., 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.

The open house is scheduled for 5-7 p.m. at the Red Wing Public Library, the Foot Room, 225 East Ave. During the open house, attendees will be able to have discussions with NRC staff about the plant's 2015 performance, inspections for the remainder of this year and other topics related to the NRC's oversight of nuclear safety.

"Every year, we meet with members of the community near the plant to talk about how the facility performed during the previous year and about the NRC's activities to ensure safety," said NRC Region III Administrator Cynthia D. Pederson. "Our resident inspectors stationed at the plant and other members of the NRC staff are looking forward to having a dialogue with local citizens."

The NRC determined that the Prairie Island facility operated safely in 2015. 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 throughout the year. Unit 2, which was in Column 1 for the first three quarters of 2015, moved to Column 2 during the last quarter due to one white performance indicator of low to moderate significance in the area of unplanned scrams. This performance indicator tracks the number of times the plant shut down unexpectedly during a specific period when the plant was operating at full power.

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, reflecting 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.

The NRC will conduct a supplemental inspection at Unit 2 to determine if the plant had understood the cause of the white performance indicator and taken sufficient corrective actions to prevent recurrence. Unit 1 will continue to receive the NRC's normal level of oversight during 2016.

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 radiological safety, spent fuel storage, and the plant's ability to identify and resolve problems.

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.