GULF STATES UTILITIES COMPANY

RIVER BEND STATION POST OFFICE BOX 220 ST. FRANCISVILLE, LOUISIANA 70775

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July 10, 1992
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U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Document Control Desk
Washington, D.C. 20555

Gentlemen:

River Bend Station - Unit 1
Docket No. 50-458

Enclosed is Gulf States Utilities Company's Special Report concerning inoperative meteorological instruments at River Bend Station (RBS). This report is submitted pursuant to RBS Technical Specification 3.3.7.3 and 6.9.2.

Sincerely,

J. W. Leavines for

W.H. Odell
Manager - Oversight
River Bend Nuclear Group

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REPORTED CONDITION

On June 22, 1992 with the reactor shut down for a refueling outage (Operational Condition 5), the meteorological tower aspirator fault light was found lit during routine surveillance. Maintenance work order request (MWOR) R160607 was initiated to troubleshoot and repair and LCO 92-320 was recorded to track completion. On 6/27/92 condition report 92-0522 was initiated to insure that a Special Report would be completed pursuant to the Technical Specification 3.3.7.3 requirement of 10 days.

INVESTIGATION

The meteorological tower at River Bend Station is a 150 foot open latticed tower located 2800 feet west of the reactor. Meteorological instrumentation is located at two levels 30 foot and 150 foot and was supplied by Teledyne-Geotech.

Located on the tower is instrumentation for measuring air temperature at both 30 foot and 150 foot elevations. The air temperature RTDs are shielded from the sun and continuously washed by ambient temperature air by a motor aspirated thermal radiation shield (MATRS). The MATRS uses a switch to indicate flow. This switch controls the illumination of the aspirator fault light.

This continuous wash of air is required to distinguish the very small delta temperature differences between the 150 foot and the 30 foot booms needed to determine air stability classes. The stability classes are used in the event of an accident to calculate offsite doses and determine protective action recommendations such as sheltering or evacuating the public. The magnitude of these delta temperatures between stability classes is approximately 0.3 degrees F.

On July 7, 1992, the condition of the meteorological tower was investigated under MWOR R160607. A large bird was observed to be roosting on the 150 foot boom. The instrument booms were lowered and the aspirator screens examined. Both the 150 foot and the 30 foot aspirator screens were found clogged with dirt. When the 150 foot aspirator screen was cleaned, the fault light extinguished. Since the 30 foot screen also showed dirt accumulation but no fault light illuminated, the flow switch was removed and examined. The flow switch in the 30 foot aspirator was found to be failed.

In addition, the 150 foot secondary wind direction vane was found to be severely bent with numerous small holes and nicks. Similar nicks and holes were found in the 150 foot primary wind direction vane. Corporate security examined the weather instruments and determined that the damage was not caused by firearms. At present, neither of the 150 foot wind direction instruments are operable.

Examination of the 30 foot boom showed evidence of mud and fresh blood. Substantial amounts of what appeared to be patches of fur littered the base of the meteorological tower. The cause of failure appears to be caused by the roosting bird.

CORRECTIVE ACTION

Additional repairs to the 30 foot flow switch and repair and troubleshooting of the 150 foot wind direction instruments are ongoing. GSU is investigating methods to remove the roosting bird.