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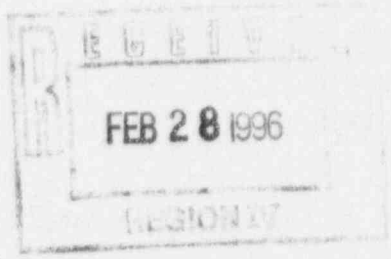
WOLF CREEK

NUCLEAR OPERATING CORPORATION

Neil S. "Buzz" Carns
Chairman, President and
Chief Executive Officer

February 22, 1996

WM 96-0029



Mr. L. J. Callan
Regional Administrator
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Region IV
611 Ryan Plaza Drive, Suite 400
Arlington, TX 76011

Dear Mr. ~~Callan~~,
J.S.

The thoughts you shared with me after the public meeting and news conference associated with recent events at Wolf Creek have prompted some ideas that I am exploring with my staff for implementation.

Your insight that several years ago we had a lot more opportunity to observe operating crews responding to challenges and transients and take corrective action based on empirical observations is right on target. The weeding out process of both behavior and individuals that fell short was a natural process. The long sustained runs and systematic approach to training taught personnel how to manufacture success. So much emphasis was placed on doing it right that we probably dulled somewhat our perceptions and responses to something that was not quite what we "expected." To try and condition personnel to a protocol of behavior that appropriately recognizes and responds to the unexpected, a "poison pill" training initiative will be undertaken.

This envisions senior management injecting during a simulator session some inappropriate action or verbal response by one of the operators. The intent is to establish recognition and response patterns to the unexpected and subsequently gain control over the situation with correct verbal and procedural response.

With respect to the necessity of exercising extra vigilance for highly critical plant components (defined for now as the emergency diesel generators and the turbine driven auxiliary feedwater pump), it is planned to institutionalize some senior oversight whenever there is an unplanned corrective maintenance activity. This may be at the level of a supervisor or another work crew not involved directly in the activity but who is knowledgeable of the correctness of the work being performed. Indeed the charge would be to not be concerned whatsoever with the amount of time available within the LCO period but only with the absolute correctness of the activity to ensure reliability of the equipment.

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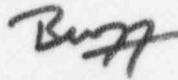
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While we will undoubtedly discover other initiatives that will improve our performance in these areas, I believe running the above two initiatives at least as pilot programs for evaluation will help to send the right signal of management awareness, interest, and, indeed, involvement in providing the opportunity for success by being deliberate in response to the unexpected even if it means more time off line. The success of these efforts will be carefully evaluated and I will let you know my thoughts on these programs as they evolve.

Again, thank you for your insight. The aim of having crews that are equipped to handle the unexpected is one we all certainly share. Defending inappropriate behavior serves no long run purpose; and, if it appeared that we may have been too defensive in favor of our operators, I apologize and want to assure you that we are beyond that posture as we prepare Wolf Creek for future operations.

Sincerely,



Neil S. Carns

NSC/lmo

cc: J. F. Ringwald (WC-NRC)