

April 9, 1998

SECY 98-072

For: The Commissioners
From: James L. Blaha, Assistant for Operations, Office of
the EDO
Subject: WEEKLY INFORMATION REPORT - WEEK ENDING APRIL 3,
1998

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*No input this week.

James L. Blaha
Assistant for Operations, OEDO

Contact:
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Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation
Items of Interest
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AP600

SPSB prepared a final revised version of the Level 1 PRA input to the AP600 Final Safety Evaluation Report (FSER). Revisions addressed the resolution of various open items as well as changes in design or analyses since the previous PRA FSER version. The most significant revision involved the list of design certification requirements (e.g., ITAACs and COL action items) which the staff and Westinghouse agreed are necessary in order to ensure that a future plant referencing the AP600 design will be built and operated in a manner that is consistent with important assumptions made in the PRA. Important revisions were also made to reflect changes in the "shutdown" PRA, the "internal fires" PRA and the risk-based seismic margins analysis. Since this PRA FSER revision reflects the resolution of all outstanding issues, the AP600 level 1 PRA review is considered finished (SPSB may still be asked to brief ACRS).

Robinson Unit 2

The NRC and the licensee held two phone calls to discuss steam generator tube examinations at Robinson Unit 2. The inspection scope included a bobbin coil examination of 62% and 50% of the tubes in the "B" and "C" steam generators, respectively. The licensee also inspected 50% of the following areas with the Plus Point probe: (1) hot leg top-of-tubesheet, (2) row 1 U-bends, (3) manufacturing burnish marks located in the hot leg, and (4) dents greater than 2 volts located in the hot leg. The Robinson steam generators were replaced in 1984 and utilize thermally-treated Alloy 600 tubing.

The licensee reported that no tubes required plugging per technical specification requirements. All manufacturing burnish marks, non-quantifiable indications and dents were identified in the pre-service examination data, and experienced essentially no change in signal, which indicates that they are not a form of active degradation. Four tubes in the "C" steam generator were identified with antivibration wear, but were below the technical specifications plugging limit. These steam generator tube examination results indicate that the replacement steam generators, utilizing thermally treated Alloy 600 tubing, are not showing significant degradation after more than ten years in service.

Salem Nuclear Generating Station Units 1 and 2

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Operational Status - The station remains in an abnormal operating procedure for high river grass loading level that requires increased monitoring of heat exchanger differential pressures for bio-fouling.

Salem Unit 1 remains in Mode 3 with individual rod position testing in progress. Following this testing, the licensee plans to purge the containment for gases baking off the new steam generator insulation. Upon completion of these evolutions and final documentation closeouts, the licensee should be ready for unit restart on April 5, 1998.

Salem Assessment Panel (SAP) - On April 1, 1998, the panel met to review the licensee's request for authorization to restart Unit 1 and evaluate the results of those activities in the Restart Action Plan required before Unit 1 restart. The panel recommended to the Regional Administrator that he authorize restart of Unit 1. The confirmatory action letter was modified and issued to the licensee on April 1, 1998. The licensee will be required to provide the results of its self-assessment of unit performance within 30 days after returning to full-power operation. The next SAP meeting will be scheduled after the licensee completes its first hold-point at 25 percent power for flux mapping.

Licensing Actions - Currently, there are no licensing amendments that are needed before the scheduled restart of Unit 1.

Dresden Units 2 and 3

Confirmatory Action Letter (CAL) No. RIII-96-016 was issued on November 21, 1996, to document commitments made by Commonwealth Edison Company (ComEd) to address preliminary results of the NRC Independent Safety Inspection (ISI) conducted at the Dresden Station. The CAL documented various planned corrective actions to improve the performance of the engineering organization. NRC Inspection report 50-237/249-97021 dated March 6, 1998, documented the inspection and closure of the remaining issues from the CAL. The NRC formally closed the CAL by letter dated March 26, 1998, to ComEd.

Quad Cities Units 1 and 2

On Friday, March 27, 1998, the staff held two meetings with Quad Cities management. At 8:00 a.m. the A/E inspection team held their exit for the completion of an extensive engineering

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inspection to analyze the design basis of the Residual Heat Removal (RHR), the RHR Service Water, the Automatic Depressurization System, and the Core Spray System. Four issues were identified needing resolution prior to restart: 1) revise procedures to ensure operability of the ultimate heat sink, 2) revise procedures to resolve potential containment overpressure/flooding, 3) confirm alternate shutdown capability (NUREG 0737), and 4) complete EDG loading analysis and modify operating procedures. Other issues that were addressed and needing further review include instrument uncertainty, RHR single failure mode vulnerability, RHR heat exchanger heat removal capacity, and use of containment overpressure.

At 1:00 p.m. NRC management met with ComEd management to discuss performance issues such as 50.59 concerns, corrective action program deficiencies, ISI, and other startup related issues. The licensee discussed the items that will be completed prior to restart. A Readiness Review Board consisting of Mr. Steve Perry, BWR Vice President, and other senior managers will be established to assure plant readiness against a set of predetermined criteria. This criteria includes ensuring TS compliance and configuration control, ensuring 50.59 and ISI/IST program adequacy, resolving Appendix R issues, hydro testing both units, resolving various component and system problems, and strengthening operations leadership and Quality and Safety Assessment (Q&SA) roles. Mr. Kingsley, Nuclear Generation Group President, said that it is too early to provide a date for the units to come back on line. Another restart meeting has been scheduled for Friday, April 10, 1998, in Region III.

D.C. Cook Units 1 & 2

On March 13, 1998, the licensee informed the NRC that it had decided to melt all of the ice in the Unit 1 ice condenser, approximately 2.59 million pounds. Following the ice melt the licensee will inspect the ice condenser components, and make any necessary repairs.

The ice condenser system at D.C. Cook consists of 1944 baskets, each 45-feet high, filled with ice containing sodium tetraborate. In case of loss-of-coolant accident or main steam line break, the ice condenser system will condense steam released into the reactor containment to reduce the pressure and avoid damage to containment structures.

The decision to melt the ice was made by the licensee after foreign material was discovered after melting the ice from 110 ice baskets. The ice was melted as part of the licensee's

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ongoing inspection and repair of the ice baskets. The foreign material included wood, plastic, wire, tape and other items. The foreign material would have the potential to affect the flow of water in the containment sump when cooling water is recirculated from the sump to the emergency core cooling system following a design basis accident.

On March 27, 1998, the licensee made the decision to also melt the ice in the Unit 2 ice condenser. The licensee is currently developing its plans and schedule for the ice removal and inspection activities. Once the ice is melted and the ice condenser systems are inspected, the licensee will begin replacing the ice. The licensee is evaluating other sources of ice to supplement the ice-making capacity of its current system.

The ice replacement and ice condenser inspections and repairs will be monitored by the resident inspectors and the Region III staff.

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Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards
Items of Interest
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Meeting with the American College of Cardiology and the American Society of Nuclear Cardiologists

On March 25, 1998, representatives from the Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards met with representatives of the American College of Cardiology (ACC) and the American Society of Nuclear Cardiologists (ASNC). This meeting was held at the request of ACC and ASNC. The primary purpose of the meeting was to discuss the training and experience requirements for authorized users performing diagnostic nuclear cardiology studies and intravascular brachytherapy for cardiac vessel restenosis. ACC and ASNC agreed with the training and experience requirements for diagnostic nuclear cardiology as presented in the "strawman" rule that was placed on the INTERNET on January 30, 1998. They also stated that it was premature to determine the training and experience requirements for intravascular users since the use of radioactive materials in this area is still under development. They preferred that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission treat this area as an emerging technology (reference Section 35.900 of the "strawman" rule) until further experience is gained in this area. Currently, most intravascular brachytherapy for cardiac vessel restenosis is being conducted by broad scope licensees.

Department of Energy Meeting on Support for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission Assistance to Former Soviet Union Republics

On April 3, 1998, staff from the Division of Fuel Cycle Safety and Safeguards met with Department of Energy (DOE) representatives to discuss future funding support from DOE to facilitate the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) ongoing material protection, control, and accounting support to regulatory agencies in Russia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan. The meeting is a follow-up to an earlier meeting with DOE during which NRC's needs were identified, and DOE indicated a willingness to explore how those needs might be accommodated.

Spent Fuel Project Office Reviews Nuclear Assurance Corporation, Intl. Application to Ship TRIGA Fuel

Spent Fuel Project Office (SFPO) staff have commenced accelerated reviews of applications to authorize the transport of TRIGA spent fuel to support the Department of Energy's Foreign Research Reactor Spent Nuclear Fuel Acceptance program. The Nuclear Assurance Corporation, Intl. (NAC) applications for the Legal

Weight Truck (LWT) cask seek approvals to transport intact and failed TRIGA fuel elements, and to update the NAC LWT design analysis to fully meet the new regulations adopted to 10 CFR Part 71, effective on April 1, 1996. These accelerated SFPO staff reviews will result in some delay to other high priority 10 CFR Parts 71 and 72 licensing casework.

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Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research
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Reactor Pressure Vessel Lower Head Failure Experiments at SNL

The lower head of the reactor pressure vessel (RPV) can be subject to significant thermal and pressure loads in the late phases of core melting during a severe accident. An understanding of the mode, timing and size of lower head failure is important in the evaluation of the consequences of a severe accident, because it defines the initial conditions for many of the subsequent challenges to containment integrity. The lower head failure tests (LHF) are being conducted by the Accident Evaluation Branch in RES at Sandia National Laboratories (SNL). The 8th test (LHF-8), in a series of tests on RPV lower head failure, was successfully conducted on March 27, 1998. This test was performed on a 1/5-scale RPV lower head (0.96 m diameter) typical of RPVs.

The purpose of this test was to confirm the results from the earlier LHF-3 test. In two earlier tests (LHF-3 and LHF-5) a similar heat flux distribution was imposed on the lower head. In the LHF-3 test, a failure occurred along the maximum heated zone that was limited to a tear of approximately 1/5 of the vessel circumference. However, in LHF-5, the lower head experienced an unexpected, massive failure, unlike the earlier LHF-3 test. It has been believed that this unexpected failure was the result of atypical test conditions as a result of testing equipment failure that occurred during the test. The preliminary results of LHF-8 indicated rupture behavior similar to LHF-3. LHF-8 was the last test in the current series of lower head failure tests. Because of the widespread international interests in this test program, additional tests are being proposed as an Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)-sponsored project. A meeting is scheduled on May 8, 1998, in conjunction with the upcoming Cooperative Severe Accident Research Program (CSARP) Meeting, to review the proposal from SNL. Experimental data from these experiments will be used to assess and validate analytical models of RPV lower head failure.

Office for Analysis and Evaluation of Operational Data
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Air-Operated Valves

On March 24 and 25, 1998, AEOD completed a site visit to Turkey Point to gather information about the status of air-operated valve (AOV) programs at U.S. plants. The AOV study team consisted of one engineer from AEOD, one engineer from RES and two engineers from INEEL. The team was accompanied by the NRR project manager. The visit was the last of seven which had been scheduled as part of AEOD's AOV study.

The purpose of the visit was to gather information about representative plants' AOV programs to assess the status of AOVs and help the NRC determine the need for a Generic Letter for AOVs similar to the Generic Letter which was written for MOVs (GL 89-10).

AEOD's AOV study has been coordinated with NRR (Mechanical Engineering Branch) and RES (Electrical, Material and Mechanical Engineering Branch), and with the Generic Safety Issues Branch to achieve closeout of Generic Issue 158, Performance of Safety-Related Power-Operated Valves Under Design Basis Conditions."

The AOV program at Turkey Point is focussing on identifying risk-important AOVs and working on current maintenance issues; however, it is not focussed upon the determination and verification of operating margin for design-basis events.

With regard to AOV support systems, Turkey Point has made major improvements to the instrument air system. The improvements include installation of high capacity motor- and diesel-driven air compressors, and installation of instrument air driers which are powered off the emergency busses.

Preliminary Notifications

1. PNO-98-019, Froehling & Robertson, Inc., RECOVERY OF MOISTURE DENSITY GAUGE
2. PNO-II-98-020, Kenton Meadows Company, Inc., GAUGE INVOLVED IN BUILDING FIRE
3. PNO-II-98-021, U. S. Department of Agriculture, DAMAGED SELF-LUMINOUS EXIT SIGNS

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Office of Administration
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Contract Awards

On March 19, 1998, Contract No. NRC-02-98-002, entitled, "Technical Assistance for Reviewing Fee-Recoverable Uranium Recovery Licensing Caseload and Development of Non Fee-Recoverable Program Guidance Documents" was awarded to Southwest Research Institute under the work for others program. The work for others program allows Southwest Research to provide services to NRC and other Federal agencies which are outside their Charter but within their areas of special competency, i.e., a special or unique capability, including qualitative aspects, developed incidental to the primary functions of the Federally Funded Research and Development Center to meet some special need. Under this contract, the contractor will provide special technical expertise to assist the NRC's Office of Nuclear Materials Safety and Safeguards in performing technical and regulatory reviews. The period of performance is March 19, 1998 through September 30, 1998 with a one-year option period. The total estimated cost of this cost-plus-fixed-fee task ordering contract, inclusive of the option period, is \$1,171,976. The contract was awarded on a non-competitive basis with the following streamlining initiatives applied: (1) electronic transmittal of SOW, and (2) reduced proposal presentation time. Contract No. NRC-04-98-054 entitled "Development of Mechanistic Modeling Capabilities for Computer Simulations of Reactor Components and Systems" was awarded to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute of Troy, New York on March 31, 1998. This contract award resulted from a competitive selection among several proposals submitted in response to a Broad Agency Announcement on Thermal Hydraulics Research published in the Commerce Business Daily on September 5, 1998. The contractor will develop physically based multidimensional models of two-phase flow for application in reactor safety studies and to demonstrate that the use of such models can enhance the predictive capabilities of NRC codes. The total contract value is \$148,417 for a one year performance period. The following streamlining measures were utilized in the acquisition process: (1) electronic submission of research interest areas to be solicited, and (2) RFP issued as CBD notice synopsis (3) award without discussions.

Criminal History Program (10 CFR Section 73.57)

Several months ago the NRC notified power reactor licensees that, based on recent guidance from the FBI, the results of criminal

history checks conducted under the requirements of 10 CFR Section 73.57, could not be provided to third parties, e.g., to contractors. In a follow up issue, representatives of OGC, NRR and DFS held a conference call with officials of the FBI Access Integrity Unit on April 1, 1998. The discussion centered on whether criminal history check results could be provided by the licensee(s) to third parties, i.e., to licensee contractors and others involved in the licensee's access authorization program, if the individual signs a consent/release form to that effect. The FBI agreed to refer the issue to their Office of General Counsel for a decision. OGC and NRR will prepare a letter to the FBI requesting their review.

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Chief Information Officer
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Freedom of Information and Privacy Act Requests Received during
the 5-Day Period of March 27, 1998 - April 2, 1998:

Radiation testing in 1950's, weapons and human. (FOIA/PA-98-129)

Radiation iodine (I-131), administration policies and misadministration report regarding 5/17-18/94 incident at Medical College of Virginia Hospitals. (FOIA/PA-98-130)

Budget, FY99 Information Technology. (FOIA/PA-98-131)

USEPA/USNRC National Sewage Sludge Survey Project, raw data. (FOIA/PA-98-132)

Named individual's statements, Wood River Medical Center 1997 inspection. (FOIA/PA-98-133)

Sylvest Management Services, Contract NRC-33-97-182. (FOIA/PA-98-134)

Named individuals, record amendment under the Privacy Act. (FOIA/PA-98-135)

Reg. Guides, irradiator license preparation. (FOIA/PA-98-136)

Sealed sources/devices safety evaluation, C.S. Products Ltd. (FOIA/PA-98-137)

Senator Lauch MacLaughlin Faircloth, NC, correspondence. (FOIA/PA-98-138)

Office of Human Resources
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Federal Savings Bonds Campaign Training Seminar Attended

On April 1, 1998, Henry Rubin attended the 1998 Federal Savings Bonds Campaign Training Seminar held at the Old Executive Office Building. The purpose of the seminar was to review the planning process for a successful U.S. Savings Bonds Campaign and to build the foundation for the 1998 Campaign. The keynote speaker was Willie Gilmore, the Assistant Secretary for Administration, Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Arrivals		
BELL, Julia	Secretary	RII
FRETZ, Robert	Project Manager	NRR
STEINBERG, Michael	Auditor	OIG
VENKER, Brenda	Secretary	HR/SPAC
Retirements		
SANDERS, Ardel	Secretary	NRR
Departures		
EDGERLY, John	Reactor Engineer	RIV

Office of Public Affairs
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Media Interest

Inquiries were received on the security inspection at Watts Bar and fire protection issues at St. Lucie.

School Volunteers Program

Participating as judges in the Montgomery County Area Science Fair were: Jack Foster, Mike Cullingford, Ronaldo Jenkins, and George Hubbard, NRR; Mary Drouin, and John Craig, RES; and Yen Ju-Chen and Kim Gruss, NMSS.

Irene Little, SBCR; Vernon Hodge, Andrea Lee, and Charles Willis, NRR; Martie Lopez-Nagle, IG; and Carolyn Cooper, ADM, participated in Career Day at Glen Haven E.S.

Nader Namish, OE, Sherry Wu, and Robert Lewis, NMSS; and Moe Levin and Pam Kruzic, OCIO, helped judge a science fair at Argyle M.S.

Tim Rollins, ADM, and Steve Alexander, NRR, judged a science fair at Piney Branch E.S.

Allen Howe, NMSS, visited Windsor Knolls M.S. to talk to the algebra class about math.

Press Releases	
Headquarters:	
98-44	NRC Issues Letter to INC Confirming Suspension of Fabrication of Packages for Transportation of Radioactive Material
98-45	NRC Proposes to Amend Licensing, Inspection and Annual Fees
98-46	NRC and University of Michigan to Discuss Apparent Violations at the Ford Nuclear Reactor
98-47	NRC Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste to Meet April 21-23 in Rockville, MD

98-48	NRC Reverses Licensing Board Requirement for Staff Inquiry Into Alleged Racial Discrimination in Siting of Proposed LES Facility
Regions:	
I-98-36	NRC Region I Administrator Approves Restart of Salem Unit 1
I-98-37	Note to Editors: Millstone Meetings
II-98-27	NRC Names New Resident Inspector at Surry Nuclear Power Station
II-98-28	NRC Staff Issues Assessment of Sequoyah Performance
III-98-22	NRC Staff to Meet With Public to Discuss Future Fermi Decommissioning Activities
III-98-23	NRC Plans Performance Review Meeting at ABB Combustion Engineering Fuel Plant in Hematite, Missouri
III-98-24	NRC Staff Proposes \$55,000 Fine Against Consumers Power Co. for October Incident at Palisades Nuclear Plant
IV-98-12	NRC to Meet With WNP-2 to Discuss March 11 Automatic Shutdown

Office of the Secretary
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Document	Date	Subject
Decision Documents Released to the Public		
1. SECY-98-058	3/26/98	Development of a Risk-Informed, Performance-Based Regulation for Fire Protection at Nuclear Power Plants (WITS 9200197)
Information Papers Released to the Public		
1. SECY-98-055	3/25/98	Response to Staff Requirements Memorandum of October 24, 1997, Regarding Improvements in Senior Management Assessment Process for Operating Reactors (M970919C)
2. SECY-98-057	3/26/98	Weekly Information Report - Week Ending March 20, 1998
Memoranda Released to the Public		
1. J. Callen, EDO to Commissioners	2/10/98	Summary of Agreement States' and Regions' Radioactive Material Programs Status and Timeliness of Integrated Materials Performance Evaluation Program (IMPEP) Reports

Commission Correspondence Released to the Public

1. Letter to Terry Concannon and Evan Woollacott, Co-Chairs, Nuclear Energy Advisory Council, dated March 24, 1998, concerns the resident inspector position at Haddam Neck and participation in CDAC meetings (incoming of December 31, 1997, also released).
2. Letter to Senators Christopher Dodd and Joseph Lieberman and Representative Sam Gejdenson dated March 26, 1998 responds to concerns regarding the restart of Millstone Unit 3 (incoming of January 22, 1998, also released).

3. Letter to Senators Fred Thompson and Christopher Bond and Representative Henry Hyde and James Talent provides NRC's report on its small entity assistance program.

Federal Register Notices Issued

1. Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste; Notice of Meeting on April 21-23, 1998.
2. Advisory Committee on the Medical Uses of Isotopes; Renewal Notice.
3. Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards; Subcommittee Meeting on Reactor Fuels, Onsite Fuel Storage, and Decommissioning; Notice of Meeting on April 23 and 24, 1998.
4. Application for a License to Export a Utilization Facility to Thailand; General Atomics.

Region I
Items of Interest
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Salem Unit 1

On April 1, 1998 the Salem Unit 1 Confirmatory Action Letter was modified to permit restart. The resident inspection staff, augmented by regional inspectors, will begin coverage of each shift during the approach to criticality, which is expected to begin on April 5, 1998.

Meeting with Combustion Engineering, Windsor, CT

On March 30, 1998, Region I staff attended a meeting sponsored by the Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps) at the ABB Combustion Engineering (CE) Windsor site. The meeting was held to discuss the status of the planned characterization of the CE site under the Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program (FUSRAP). The Corps presented background information, an update on the current status of the characterization effort, and issues for future consideration. In addition to NRC and CE staff, meeting attendees included town of Windsor officials, and the Corps' contractor for the project, SAIC.

Presentation

On March 27, 1998 John Kinneman, Branch Chief, DNMS, made a presentation regarding Federal Regulation of Radionuclide Users to a class on Occupational and Environmental Radiation Protection at the Harvard School of Public Health, Cambridge, MA.

Region II
Items of Interest
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Florida Power and Light Company - St. Lucie

Representatives from the St. Lucie Nuclear Station were in the Regional Office on March 31 to attend a Predecisional Enforcement Conference to discuss an apparent violation involving improper access control. An individual had gained access to the facility following favorable termination of his employment since his security access had not been promptly removed.

An NRR led Fire Protection Functional Inspection exited at the St. Lucie plant on April 3, 1998. The inspection was of the Unit 1 facility. Both NRR and the Region were represented at the exit by managers. The licensee had identified many of the team's findings during a pre-inspection self-assessment. The licensee was taking compensatory actions as needed based on the inspection results.

Tennessee Valley Authority - Brown's Ferry and Bellefonte

On April 2, 1998, the Regional Administrator and the Deputy Director, NRR, attended management meetings at the Browns Ferry and Bellefonte Nuclear Stations and toured both sites.

Florida Power Corporation - Crystal River

Representatives from the Crystal River Nuclear Station attended a Predecisional Enforcement Conference in the Regional Office on April 2. Issues discussed included an apparent violation of 10 CFR 50.59 regarding procedural changes to their FSAR and Emergency Operating procedures regarding use of the Low Pressure Injection crossover lines during postulated post accident conditions.

U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA), Franklin, North Carolina

On March 27, 1998, the NRC was notified by the State of North Carolina that vials containing tritium from a generally licensed self-luminous exit sign had been broken in a dormitory at the USDA Job Corps Training Center in Franklin, North Carolina. On March 28, Region II and Department of Energy (DOE) Radiological Assistance Program (RAP) survey team followed up on the event at the site determining the circumstances surrounding the breakage, performing surveys to identify any residual contamination, and obtaining bioassay samples from five individuals involved in the

breaking of the vials. Surveys identified one area of elevated removable tritium contamination near a phone; this area was isolated by the USDA. A USDA contractor began decontamination at the site on April 1. USDA is also performing additional bioassays for all other individuals housed in the dormitory.

NDT Services, Inc., Caguas, Puerto Rico

On March 27, 1998, the NRC issued an immediately effective order suspending the license for NDT Services, Inc., a radiography licensee. The order was issued based on inspection findings and on information from an ongoing Office of Investigations (OI) investigation that identified numerous violations. On March 30, an inspection was done at the facility to verify that the sources were secured as required by the order.

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Region III
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D. C. Cook Nuclear Power Station SALP Public Meeting

On April 3, 1998, the NRC Regional Administrator A. Bill Beach and other members of the NRC staff met in Bridgman, Michigan, with representatives of American Electric Power Company to review the recently issued Systematic Assessment of Licensee Performance (SALP) for the D.C. Cook Nuclear Power Station. The plant received ratings of "good" in plant operations, maintenance, and plant support and "acceptable" in engineering.

Management Meeting with American Electric Power Company - D.C. Cook Station

On April 3, 1998, a meeting was conducted at the D. C. Cook Nuclear Power Station in Bridgman, Michigan, between management representatives from American Electric Power Company and members of the NRC staff. The company presented the formal restart plan for the station. NRC Region III Regional Administrator A. Bill Beach participated in the meeting.

Regional Administrator Visit to Palisades Nuclear Power Plant

On April 2, 1998, Regional Administrator A. Bill Beach toured the Palisades Nuclear Power Plant and met with NRC resident inspectors. He also met with Consumers Power Company management on an NRC enforcement action that was issued that day on a control rod drive incident that occurred in October 1997 at the plant.

Region IV
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Entergy Operations, Inc (Entergy) Corporate Meeting

On April 2, 1998, the Deputy Executive Director for Regulatory Programs, the Regional Administrator, and other NRC staff attended a meeting at the Entergy corporate office in Jackson, Mississippi. At the meeting the overall direction of Entergy and the performance of each Entergy facility (Arkansas Nuclear One, Grand Gulf, River Bend, and Waterford 3) was discussed. Additionally, there was a discussion of regional initiatives in the planning for and conduct of inspections.

Palo Verde Enforcement Conference

On March 31, 1998, the Region IV Administrator and staff conducted a pre-decisional enforcement conference in the Region IV offices with representatives of Arizona Public Service, the licensee for the Palo Verde Station. Members of the NRR Projects and Office of Enforcement staff participated by video-conference. The conference dealt with the failure of operators to properly conduct and accurately document a surveillance test to verify offsite power source availability when an emergency diesel generator was removed from service in March, 1993.

Arkansas Nuclear One Control Rod Drive Problem

Arkansas Nuclear One, Unit 1 began refueling outage 1R14 on Saturday, March 28, 1998. After the shutdown, operators found that one control rod would not reinsert past the 2.4 percent withdrawn position. The rod (K-7) had fully inserted when tripped, but when operators subsequently withdrew it during a procedure to verify shutdown margin, it would not reinsert. The plant had previously discovered similar behavior for rod L-14 during an unplanned shutdown in January 1998 (see PNO-IV-98-0001A.) In that instance, rod L-14 fully inserted when tripped, but would not reinsert past 5 percent withdrawn. The licensee subsequently declared rod L-14 inoperable.

The licensee suspects that debris in the control rod drive mechanism caused the inability to fully insert rods K-7 and L-14. During troubleshooting on April 2, the licensee found that both control rod drive mechanisms had evidence of binding. In both cases, the control rods fell freely into the core after they were uncoupled. Licensee technical staff felt that the results of the trouble-shooting point clearly to the control rod drive

mechanisms as the source of the stuck control rods. The licensee plans to ship both control rod drive mechanisms to Frammatomme for additional testing. The licensee will replace the two degraded control rod drive mechanisms, and finalize plans for further action regarding the remaining control rod drive mechanisms after obtaining the results of Frammatomme investigation, due on or about April 10.

South Texas Project Main Steam Safety Valve (MSSV) Test Failures

On April 1, 1998, technicians at Unit 1 of the South Texas Project performed lift tests on two MSSVs connected to the A steam generator main steam line. The intent of the test was to demonstrate that corrective actions for a previously identified "oxide-locking" condition were effective. The technicians performed the test in accordance with the applicable ASME code utilizing a preventive maintenance procedure, and both valves failed. The technicians then satisfactorily tested two additional valves in the same main steam line that had not been identified as having "oxide-locking" problems. Based on these results, engineers expanded the test scope to include four valves in Unit 2 which had been identified as susceptible to "oxide-locking." On April 2, the valves in Unit 2 tested satisfactorily.

Although the ASME code requires the testing of additional valves in the total population (20 per unit), licensee engineers evaluated that this requirement did not apply because the tests were not "regular tests" as described in the code. Additionally, the engineers believed that the condition being evaluated was isolated to the six identified valves because of a strong correlation of past test results to the maintenance history of the valves. This position was discussed with Region IV and the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation (NRR). The NRR staff determined that neither the NRC nor the licensee should make an interpretation of the code, this being the responsibility of the ASME code committee.

To resolve this issue, the NRR technical staff requested the licensee to submit a code inquiry to ASME to obtain an interpretation. Also, the licensee agreed to submit on the docket: (1) STP's corrective action plan for these valves; (2) safety analyses addressing the consequences of the two suspect MSSVs sticking in Unit 1 and the four suspect MSSVs sticking in Unit 2; and, (3) a commitment to test all six suspect MSSVs at an increased frequency.