All 3 Oconee reactors back at full power

BY NORMAN CANNADA
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SENECA — For the first time in nearly two months, all three reactors at the Oconee Nuclear Station are operating at full power.

Unit No. 2 went back online last week and was operating at full power Monday, according to Duke Energy spokeswoman B.J. Gatten. The unit had been down because of a planned outage for refueling since Oct. 12 and went back online Dec. 5.

Unplanned shutdowns at the other two units have happened during the time of the Unit No. 2 outage, leaving the plant operating with only one working unit at times.

"Oconee operates best when all three units are running around the clock to provide the electricity our customers need," Gatten said. "Having all three units back online provides the most value for the homes and businesses in the area."

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B.J. Gatten
Duke Energy spokeswoman

Unit No. 3 was shut down for several days Oct. 24 after leaking seals on a valve actuator prevented the valve from working properly and caused fluctuating flows of feedwater into the unit. Leaking seals that were identified as the cause of the problem were replaced. That shutdown was the first manual shutdown at the Oconee plant since August 2010.

Unit No. 1 was shut down Nov. 11 for nearly three weeks after a leak was discovered in the unit's containment building. A pipe which provides backup water to the reactor coolant system in Unit No. 1 at the Oconee Nuclear Station was identified as the source of a leak and was cut out and replaced.

The leak was less than one-tenth of a gallon per minute and was inside the reactor's containment building, Gatten said.

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