Duke Energy to outline relicensing process

Staff Reports

SENECA — The plans and processes Duke Energy intends to use as it seeks relicensing of its Oconee Nuclear Station will be outlined during a four-hour open house on Thursday.

The event will be held from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Duke's World of Energy facility, 7812 Rochester Hwy.

The current license to operate the nuclear facility will expire in 2016, but relicensing activity is already under way.

The relicensing project will ultimately lead to new operating licenses for the Jocassee and Keowee hydroelectric stations. A new license is typically granted for 30-50 years.

The Federal Energy Power Authority (which became the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission or FERC) granted the Keowee-Toxaway Hydroelectric Project its initial license in 1966.

The Keowee-Toxaway project provides 820 megawatts of power for Duke Energy customers. It also supports the operation of more than 3,600 megawatts of nuclear and pumped storage generating facilities.

"We will involve a number of federal, state and local resource agencies, government organizations and non-governmental organizations as part of our stakeholder team — a key part of the process," said Jen Huff, license renewal team leader. "We're beginning this process early to allow time for input from these groups as we work through the license application process."

The team will use the FERC's Integrated Licensing Process (ILP), which is intended to streamline the process and ensure adequate resource protection.

"Duke Energy has operated these facilities in a way that balances the need for making electricity for our customers while maintaining water quality and supply, recreation and protecting fish and wildlife habitat," said Huff. "We are committed to this same balance with the new license application."

Duke Energy will submit the license application in 2014.

The public is invited to stop by any time during Thursday's four-hour event. There will be no formal presentation, but Duke Energy representatives will be available to share information on relicensing process steps and components; how the public can provide input to the relicensing process; the stakeholder team process; the schedule of key steps and activities; and which studies and other information are needed for relicensing.

The public also can read more on the project's Web site at www.duke-energy.com/keowee-toxaway-relicensing/keowee-toxaway-project.asp.