# Duke remains committed to fire plan




Duke Energy Oconee Nuclear Station's three reactors create steam using nuclear energy to power these three turbines, which produce enough electricity to power the Upstate. A group of media representatives toured the facility Tuesday.

MONICA KREBER | THE JOURNAL

BY NORMAN CANNADA
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — As officials at Duke Energy's Oconee Nuclear Station await potential penalties for missing a December 2012 deadline to complete a fire safety plan, a Duke official said Wednesday the company is committed to fully implementing the plan to improve fire safety.

"We are committed to completing the project," Scott Batson, site vice president at Oconee Nuclear Station, said as he led a tour for local journalists Wednesday. "It will be a big benefit to us."

**The site vice president at Oconee Nuclear Station said Duke is spending $1 billion on the Protected Service Water systems and efforts to complete the fire safety plan. The systems are designed to mitigate potential damage from fire, tornadoes and high-energy line breaks.**

Batson said Duke is spending $1 billion on the Protected Service Water (PSW) systems and efforts to complete the fire safety plan. The PSW systems are designed to mitigate potential damage from fire, tornadoes and high-energy line breaks.

But, the project has not been without its challenges. Duke originally agreed to meet all requirements for a pilot fire safety plan, including PSW installation, by Dec. 31, 2012. Last July, Oconee officials asked for an extension of the deadline.

SEE DUKE, PAGE A5

# DUKE: '... we ran into issues

FROM PAGE A1

which was denied in a Jan. 15 letter from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC).

The Oconee Nuclear Station is currently out of compliance with the NRC for missing the deadline. The NRC is expected to announce next month what penalties, if any, will be assessed against Duke for what they call "an apparent violation" at the plant.

The biggest remaining part of the safety plan is the installation of the PSW system.

Batson compared the struggles of meeting the deadline with that of a pioneer being the first to travel across the United States.

"If you're the first ones to travel across the United States, you come to the Mississippi River and you didn't know it was there or how to get around it," he said. "With the PSW project, we ran into issues we weren't expecting."

Until the project is completed, Batson said the plant has put in several temporary solutions designed to mitigate damage from potential fires. Among those solutions are "fire watchers," people who walk through the plant looking for any potential fire issues or problems with machines.

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The Protected Service Water systems building, pictured, at Duke Energy's Oconee Nuclear Station is the last major remaining project for completion of Duke's fire safety plan. Duke missed a Dec. 31, 2012, deadline to have the project completed and may face penalties next month from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

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