

Feds to review 2011 safety performance

FOR THE JOURNAL

SALEM — The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission will present its assessment of Oconee Nuclear Station's safety performance in 2011 during an April 9 meeting at Duke's World of Energy.

The public is encouraged to attend and ask questions about plant safety and the NRC's role in plant operations as part of the 6:30 p.m. meeting.

"Last year, our inspectors

spent many hours ensuring that the Oconee plant met NRC safety requirements and protected both people living near the plant and the overall environment," NRC Region II Administrator Victor McCree said.

NRC inspectors also looked at whether there were immediate safety concerns at Oconee and other U.S. plants after the March 2011 events at the Fukushima Daiichi plant in Japan. Those reviews found that the

plants remained safe.

The NRC found that the Oconee plant met all NRC safety objectives during 2011. However, all three Oconee units will be subject to additional NRC oversight due to a yellow inspection finding on Dec. 6, 2011, related to a failure to adequately maintain the plant's standby shutdown systems. These systems would be used to safely shut down the units if normal and emergency systems are unavailable.

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at Oconee Nuclear

The NRC determined that the standby shutdown systems issue will be considered an "old design issue," which means the yellow finding will not impact Oconee's regulatory standing. However, the plant will undergo a supplemental inspection to review the actions taken to address the yellow finding.

In addition to detailed baseline NRC inspections, Oconee will receive generic inspections related to buried piping,

operator licensing examinations, radiological hazard assessment and triennial fire protection inspections. The NRC staff will also continue its review of ongoing significant modifications to the plant.

A letter sent from the NRC to plant officials, will serve as the basis for the meeting discussion. The letter is available on the NRC website at: www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVER-SIGHT/ASSESS/LETTERS/oco_2011q4.pdf.