

# NRC: Oconee Nuclear

But maintenance-related 2008 incident will trigger additional federal oversight

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All three reactor units at Oconee Nuclear Station operated safely overall during 2008; however, Unit 1 will be under greater federal scrutiny due to an April 15 incident that raised safety concerns, federal officials

said Thursday.

With one exception, all findings during the year were of "very low safety significance," said Andy Hutto, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission senior resident inspector at the plant. Those were corrected appropriately, he said.

Only the April 15 incident

rose to a level of concern that triggers additional oversight, Hutto said.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission held an open house Thursday as its public forum for its annual assessment of the nuclear station's performance for 2008 rather than a meeting between NRC and Duke Energy officials as has been done in the past. Duke and NRC officials were present to answer

questions.

There will be a supplemental inspection of Unit 1 this summer because of a brief power loss that interrupted cooling on April 15 during a scheduled maintenance and refueling outage for the reactor, Hutto said.

The NRC classified it as having "low to moderate safety significance," and after earlier meetings with plant officials the NRC found the problem was due

## operated safely

to an inadequate maintenance procedure on a voltage regulator. The NRC determined that operators responded appropriately, Hutto said.

Duke has maintained that the incident was of low safety significance.

Sandra Magee, a Duke spokeswoman, said the incident posed no public safety concern.

Dave Baxter, site vice president at the Oconee

Nuclear Station, said corrective actions were taken.

"When something happens at the plant we have procedures and trained operators. In that situation we had almost a double crew, and we had additional management oversight because of the refueling and maintenance outage. The operators saw what happened and took prompt corrective action to resolve the issue," Baxter said.