

NRC to pay special visit to nuclear station

Inspection reveals connection issue with transformer

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THE JOURNAL

SENECA — The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will begin a special inspection at Duke Energy's Oconee Nuclear Station today after an issue related to one of the plant's startup transformers was discovered during a routine inspection.

The purpose of the inspection is to assess the degradation of power cables on startup transformers for two of the plant's three units, the NRC said in a news release.

A Duke operator was performing routine inspections when he discovered one of the plant's three backup transformers was not properly connected, Duke spokesperson Mikayla Kreuzberger said. ONS teams repaired the cable and restored the backup transformer to standby mode.

Upon further inspection, it was determined other cables linked to another startup transformer were in a degraded condition.

The cables have been repaired, and the transformers are available for use if needed, the NRC said.

"There was not an event in which the startup transformers were needed, but they play a very important role in some circumstances by providing electrical power to plant safety equipment," said Leonard Wert, acting NRC Region II administrator. "We felt a special inspection was warranted to gather more information about Duke's response and also determine if there are generic issues that may apply to other plants."

The on-site portion of the inspection will take several days. A report documenting the results should be issued within 45 days of the completion of the inspection.

The backup transformers remain in standby mode at all times and supply electricity to the plant in the

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event a unit is taken out of service and cannot provide its own electricity.

Kreuzberger said the "safe, reliable operation of Oconee Nuclear Station is our top priority," and the company takes the reliability of all plant equipment seriously.

"Part of our focus on safe operation is ensuring our employees regularly inspect, with a critical eye, all equipment at Oconee Nuclear Station to ensure it is reliable and operating safely, including all backup systems," she said.

Kreuzberger said at no time were the health and safety of the public or employees impacted, nor was service interrupted.

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