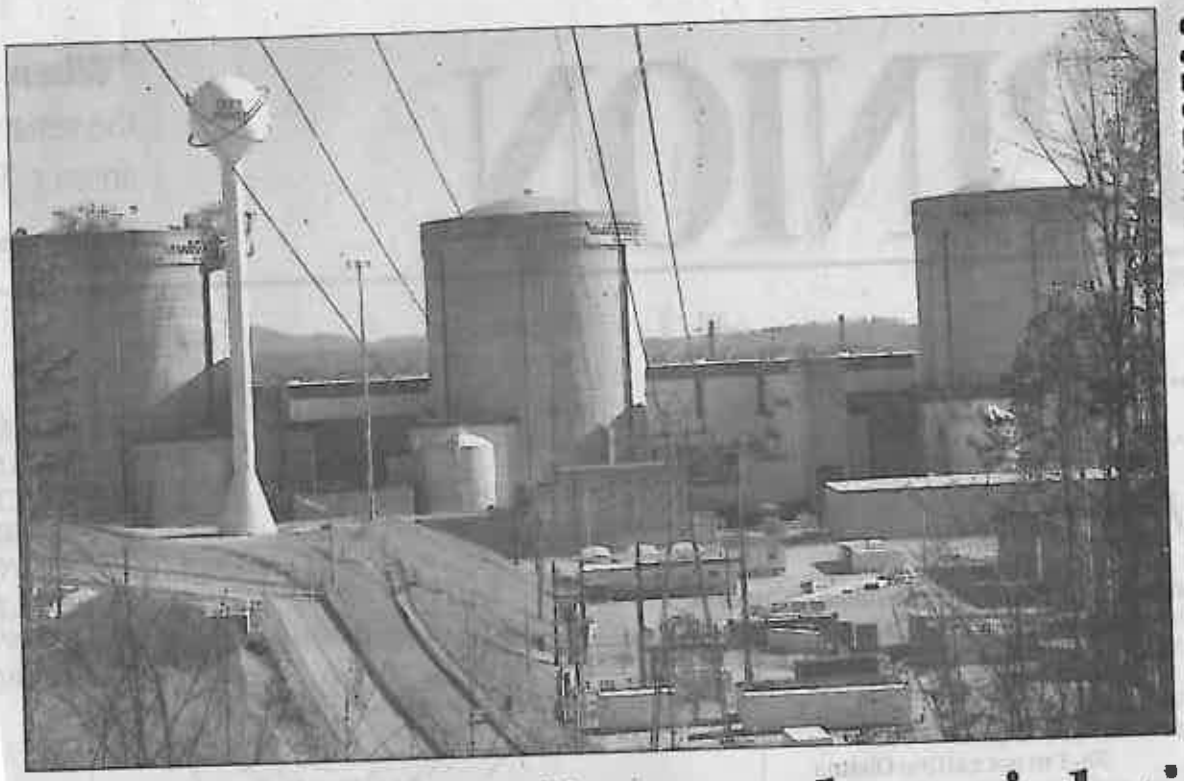


Officials of Duke Energy's Oconee Nuclear Station will appear at an Atlanta hearing on July 13 to give their version of events surrounding apparent safety violations related to the plant's shutdown system.

FILE PHOTO

ONS, Feds to discuss plant violations

FOR THE JOURNAL

SALEM — Oconee Nuclear Station (ONS) officials have been called to Atlanta to discuss the safety significance of three apparent violations of the plant's last line of defense.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has scheduled a meeting July 13 to discuss apparent violations linked to problems with the plant's standby shutdown system.

According to ONS spokesman Addie Bradshaw, the health and safety of the public was never in danger since the system in question would only have been called into use under the most extreme circumstances such as sabotage or fire.

She said that under circumstances that would require evacuation of the control room the facility would use a "let down line" to add or take away water from the reactors. During last October's refueling of the Unit 1 reactor, foreign material was found creating a blockage in the unit's let down line.

Bradshaw said the graphite-based material may have broken off a casket and added that the situation was "immediately addressed and repairs made."

She said initially it was decided the problem would not be an issue for reactor Units 2 and 3 but that, upon further discussion, it was decided to inspect those units. In February, similar material was found in the let down lines of the other two reactors.

Again, Bradshaw said repairs were made without incident.

The NRC said the hearing will discuss two apparent violations associated with the wearing down of the standby shutdown facility, as well as a third violation associated with materially incorrect information being provided to the NRC from the plant's action plan to address the degradation.

The Atlanta meeting will begin at 9 a.m. at the NRC office, 245 Peachtree Center Ave., NE, Suite 1200. The meeting will be open to observation and participation by the public.

"NRC officials will review information presented by Duke Energy at the meeting and reach a later decision on appropriate regulatory action," NRC Public Affairs Officer Joey Ledford said.