Reactor repairs under way

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SENECA — Repairs are under way to take care of a leak that has caused a reactor at the Oconee Nuclear Station to be shutdown for more than 10 days.

Duke Energy spokeswoman B.J. Gatten said the repairs are being done at Unit No. 1, where a leak in a containment building led to the unit being shut down Nov. 11. A pipe that provides backup water to the reactor coolant system has been identified as the source of the leak.

The leak was less than one-tenth of a gallon per minute and was inside the reactor's containment building. Gatten and other officials said the leak never posed a threat to the community, and customer service was not interrupted.

Gatten emphasized the pipe involved in the leak provided backup water.

While officials are continuing to monitor the situation, Gatten said inspections at the plant's two other reactors did not reveal similar problems with pipes there.

Gatten said there is no timetable yet for bringing the unit back online, but said it is likely that finding the root cause of the leak "will probably take longer than bringing the unit back online."

Unit No. 3 was shut down in late October for an unrelated issue but is now operating at 100 percent. Unit No. 2 has been in a planned shutdown for more than a month for refueling.

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