Shoreline inspection reveals plenty of dilapidated docks

By Melinda Skutnick | Mooresville Tribune

Approximately 250 piers and other structures along the Iredell County shoreline of Lake Norman are in need of repair, according to a recent inspection of the lake's eastern side by Duke Energy Carolinas.

As part of the company's Structure Renovation/Removal Program â□□ initiated in 1996 to survey, identify and correct problem structures on lakes managed by Duke Energy Carolinas â□□ crews look for signs of obvious neglect, such as missing planks, inadequate flotation or structural failure. Structures inspected are located inside the shoreline, notes a Duke Energy release.

The Lake Norman inspection began in March of this year and will continue into Iredell County this summer, said Duke Energy Corporate Communications member Andy Thompson, adding that 41 instances were identified in Mecklenburg County.

In addition, inspections are complete along the entire shoreline of Mountain Island Lake, where the piers and structures of 33 property owners were deemed "in need of repair."

"Program results thus far show that about 5 percent of the piers on Duke Energy's lakes are in need of major repair," said Joe Hall, director of Duke Energy's Lake Services.

"The license granted to Duke Energy by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission provides guidelines for hydro power generation on the lakes," he added. "The same license allows for the permitting of piers, seawalls and other activities to enhance recreational use of the lake, but it also requires that we ensure these structures remain in good repair and do not pose a hazard to public safety and navigation."

When unsafe conditions are found, owners are notified and asked to contact Duke with a plan for repair or removal.

"We began our program in 1996 and have completed the inventories or inspections on a number of lakes in North and South Carolina on the Catawba-Wateree System," said Hall. "Property owner cooperation thus far has been outstanding."

However, if repairs are not made or structures and abandoned boats removed, he noted that steps will be taken for removal at the owner's expense and any previous permits revoked.
Duke Energy will also be inspecting lakes Keowee and Jocassee on the Keowee-Toxaway Project in South Carolina during 2009.