

Duke exercising caution for outage

Official: No contractors coming to town 'straight from hot-spot areas' amid pandemic

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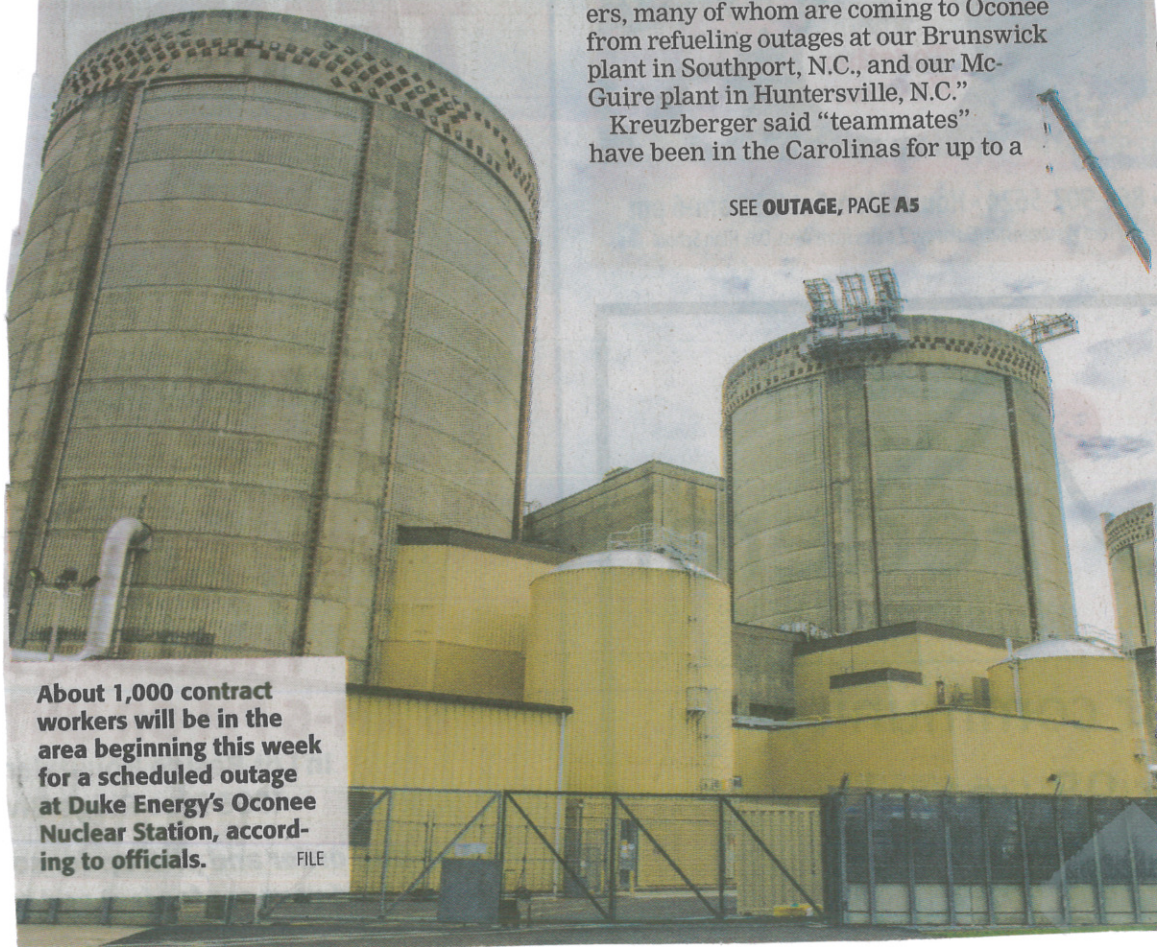
SENECA — Duke Energy has worked with contracting companies to pre-screen workers ahead of a scheduled refueling of Oconee Nuclear Station's No. 3 reactor to ensure none are coming straight from COVID-19 hot spots.

Duke Energy spokeswoman Mikayla Kreuzberger said in-house and contract workers have been following "social distancing and effective hygiene protocols" ahead of the scheduled work.

"For our refueling outage, we have Duke Energy workers supporting the site from our other Carolinas nuclear and fossil plants," she said in an email. "In addition, we do bring in contract workers, many of whom are coming to Oconee from refueling outages at our Brunswick plant in Southport, N.C., and our McGuire plant in Huntersville, N.C."

Kreuzberger said "teammates" have been in the Carolinas for up to a

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About 1,000 contract workers will be in the area beginning this week for a scheduled outage at Duke Energy's Oconee Nuclear Station, according to officials.

FILE

OUTAGE: Duke Energy has prescreened contractors

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month or more and have followed North Carolina's stay-at-home order, which allows workers to continue critical infrastructure support.

"We worked with our contract companies to prescreen workers to ensure they are not coming straight from hot-spot areas, which means that if they are from any hot-spot areas, they have been within the area for the appropriate amount of time before coming onsite," Kreuzberger said.

The outage is scheduled to begin on Saturday and will take a few weeks. Across the nuclear power industry, refueling outages typically bring in roughly 1,000 workers.

Duke has not requested any exemptions from the lodging and travel restrictions imposed last week by Gov. Henry McMaster from high-risk areas, according to Kreuzberger.

"We are following CDC recommendations and industry best practices to prevent the potential spread of COVID-19," she told

The Journal last week. "We take our actions very seriously, and we expect all teammates to do the same."

Kreuzberger said she could not verify whether any hotels had canceled Duke reservations.

McMaster's executive order went into effect last Friday prohibiting short-term rentals, vacation rentals or other lodging accommodations from accepting any new bookings from people living in or traveling from any area identified in a CDC travel advisory or location with exten-

sive community transmission, specifically citing the Tri-State area of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

Workers arriving onsite will be screened with a series of questions and temperature checks, according to Kreuzberger.

Oconee Nuclear Station has three reactors that produce enough electricity to power 2 million homes. Every 24 months, each reactor is taken offline and refueled.

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