

# Nuclear station receives positive report from feds

BY RILEY MORNINGSTAR  
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SENECA — In its latest inspection of the three Oconee Nuclear Station units, a federal agency found the “overall performance” at the facility “preserved public health and safety.”

A Wednesday letter from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) said its end-of-cycle performance assessment of the three reactors covered all of 2021. Observers looked at “performance indicators (PIs), inspection

results and enforcement actions.”

“The NRC determined the performance ... during the most recent quarter was within the Licensee Response Column the highest performance category of the NRC’s Reactor Oversight Process (ROP) Action Matrix, because all inspection findings had very low safety significance (i.e., Green), and all PIs were within the expected range (i.e., Green). Therefore, the NRC plans to conduct

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ROP baseline inspections at your facility,” a letter to Duke Energy site vice president Steven Snider said.

The Reactor Oversight Process requires thousands of hours of inspection each year. The inspection uses color-coding to report findings and measure plant performance. Findings with more than very low safety significance results trigger increased oversight.

## UPDATE PROVIDED ON ‘UNUSUAL EVENT’

Separately, Duke is required to submit a Licensee Event Report (LER) to the NRC within 60 days about “an unusual event” that happened in early February.

“These reports contain root causes and corrective actions undertaken by licensees,” NRC spokesman Dave Gasperon said.

He added Duke Energy notified the federal agency about the event “as required.”

Spokeswoman McKayla Kreuzberger told The Journal at the time workers were going through plans to restart

the unit after there was an “issue with pumps.” She added there was no fire after operators received fire detection indications from a different area within the unit.

On Thursday, Gasperon told The Journal a preliminary report found there was no actual fire, and a smoke source was “coating applied to emergency feedwater piping in the room.”

“When the plant tripped, hot water flowed through the piping, heating up, causing the coating to smoke. The pipe is rated for the temperature, so there is no safety concern,” he said. “The licensee has removed the paint from the pipes that caused the smoke and replaced it with paint to handle the pipe’s potential temperature in a similar situation in the future.”

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