

January 13, 2000

SECY-00-0008

For: The Commissioners
From: James L. Blaha, Assistant for Operations, Office of the EDO
/RA/
Subject: SECY-00-0008 WEEKLY INFORMATION REPORT - WEEK
ENDING JANUARY 7, 2000

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*No input this week.

James L. Blaha
Assistant for Operations, OEDO

Contact:
T. Bergman, OEDO

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WEEKLY INFORMATION REPORT - WEEK ENDING JANUARY 7, 2000

The Weekly Information Report is compiled by the Office of the EDO and includes highlights of Headquarters and Regional Office activities.

Contact: T. Bergman, OEDO by E-mail: tab@nrc.gov.

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*No input this week

Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation
Items of Interest
Week Ending January 7, 2000

ABB to Sell Nuclear Business to BNFL

ABB announced that they are selling their nuclear power businesses to BNFL. Under the terms of the agreement, U.K.-based BNFL will purchase ABB's worldwide nuclear businesses headquartered in Windsor, Connecticut, for 485 million dollars. Apart from the US, ABB's main nuclear businesses are located in Sweden, France, and Germany. The divested businesses employ about 3,000 people.

BNFL bought Westinghouse Electric Company earlier this year. BNFL is a global supplier of nuclear fuel, products, and services. The acquisition expands BNFL product mix to include ABB's BWR systems as well as Combustion Engineering's strength in PWRs, especially in growth areas like Korea.

Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant, Unit 1

Steam Generator Replacement Status - Southern Nuclear Operating Company (SNC) will replace the Farley Unit 1 steam generators during the upcoming spring 2000 refueling. On December 29, 1999, NRR issued an amendment approving the technical specification changes necessary to support the steam generator replacement.

Steam generator tube (primary-secondary coolant) leakage rates have not changed over the last six months. The main steamline radiation monitor and radiochemistry samples indicate that the leakage is low, 1.5 gpd or less, mainly from steam generator 1B. The amount of leakage from the Unit 1 fuel remains low with a primary coolant concentration of dose equivalent Iodine-131 of $1.2E-02$ uCi/gm.

Haddam Neck Completes Steam Generator Removal

As of the end of December 1999, Haddam Neck removed all 4 steam generator lower assemblies from containment. (The steam domes have already been removed and shipped.) The pressurizer was also removed. The components are onsite awaiting shipment to Barnwell, SC. The shipments were delayed due to low water levels in the Savannah River; however, the licensee believes it will be able to make the shipments via barge by the end of March 2000.

V.C. Summer

On December 28, 1999, South Carolina Electric and Gas, the licensee for V.C. Summer, performed confirmatory testing of Kaowool fire barriers. The testing was conducted at OMEGA Point Laboratories in San Antonio, Texas, using a test assembly based on actual V.C. Summer configurations consisting of three 1-inch layers of Kaowool material. Preliminary results indicate that some of the cable/conduit applications did not meet the requirements of Appendix R, Section III.G.2 (free of fire damage for one hour). These applications include small open air conduit (less than or equal to 1"), air drops and small cable trays (less than or equal to 6" x 6"). The testing demonstrated excess temperatures and cable failure in these

protected assemblies. Other applications (4" conduit, 36" x 6" cable tray) performed acceptably based on a preliminary review of the test data. The licensee is currently comparing the test configurations to actual plant configurations to determine the affected areas. As a conservative measure, a roving fire watch has been established for all Appendix R areas that use Kaowool. Additional actions will be based on further engineering evaluations.

Reactor Oversight Process Improvements

On January 4-5, 2000, headquarters and regional representatives conducted an Internal Lessons Learned Workshop. During this workshop the Inspection Program Branch staff identified the issues for public workshop discussion, discussed lessons learned issues associated with Performance Indicators, Inspection Program, Significance Determination Process, Assessment and Enforcement, Communication, and discussed their impact on initial implementation.

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Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards
Items of Interest
Week Ending January 7, 2000

Certificate of Compliance for TRUPACT-II Transport Package Issued

On December 28, 1999, the Spent Fuel Project Office issued a revised Certificate of Compliance for the TRUPACT-II transport package. The amendment authorizes additional waste forms to be transported in the package. The package is used for shipping plutonium-contaminated waste materials from Department of Energy (DOE) facilities to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) near Carlsbad, New Mexico. Under the federal WIPP Land Withdrawal Act, DOE may not transport any radioactive materials to, or from, the WIPP facility, except in packages approved by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. DOE anticipates that approximately 20,000 shipments will be made to WIPP in TRUPACT-II packages over the next 30 years.

Hearing Request Regarding Fansteel

On December 29, 1999, the Atomic Safety Licensing Board granted the October 14, 1999, request by the state of Oklahoma for a hearing on the matter of Fansteel Inc.'s request to amend Source Materials License No. SMB-911 to authorize the construction of a low level waste containment cell. The Memorandum and Order granting the request agreed that nearly every issue discussed in the state of Oklahoma's request was a valid area of concern. Preparation of the hearing file, which is due by the end of January 2000, is underway.

Department of Energy Selects the Savannah River Site for the Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility

The Department of Energy (DOE) selected the Savannah River site in Aiken, South Carolina, as the location for three facilities to dispose of surplus weapons grade plutonium, including the mixed oxide (MOX) fuel fabrication facility. The Secretary of Energy signed the Record of Decision for DOE's selections on January 4, 2000. In March 1999, DOE contracted with Duke Engineering, COGEMA Inc., and Stone & Webster, commonly referred to as DCS, to construct and operate the MOX fuel fabrication facility. Full implementation of the DOE/DCS base contract was contingent upon completion of the Record of Decision. DOE now plans to fully implement the base contract. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has regulatory authority over the MOX fuel fabrication facility, and expects that DCS will submit an application for construction approval in September 2000.

Meeting with Representatives of International Isotopes Idaho, Inc.

On January 5, 2000, representatives from the Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards and Region IV conducted an open meeting with representatives of International Isotopes Idaho, Inc. (I⁴) to discuss a proposed application for a license to possess and distribute bulk radioisotopes. I⁴ is a subsidiary of International Isotopes Inc. (I³) of Denton, Texas, a radioisotope manufacturer. I⁴ was established October 1996 to commercialize the hot cell services and the radioactive isotopes available at the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEEL) in Idaho Falls, Idaho, under Department of Energy (DOE)

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regulatory authority. I⁴ has the full rights to market and sell all isotope products manufactured at the Advanced Test Reactor at the INEEL site. I⁴ currently produces iridium-192, cobalt-60, nickel-63, cobalt-58, and strontium-89. In addition, I⁴ performs specialized hot cell services for DOE.

I⁴ plans to construct a hot cell facility outside the DOE reservation in Idaho Falls, Idaho, to expand their operations. I⁴ must operate this facility under Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) regulatory authority. However, I⁴ plans to continue to provide services for hot cell activities at INEEL under DOE authority. Under the proposed NRC license, I⁴ plans to process and distribute bulk isotopes, radiopharmaceutical drug substances, and sealed sources. In addition, I⁴ plans to distribute irradiated topaz under a contract with the University of Missouri. Representatives indicated that they also plan to import bulk radiochemicals from foreign suppliers. Other planned expanded operations included distribution of low activity iridium-192 vascular brachytherapy sources and production of yttrium-90 drug substances.

Based on the preliminary discussions with I⁴, NRC staff believes that I⁴ will need a specific broadscope license for possession, manufacturing and distribution; an exempt distribution license for distribution of gem stones; and a quality assurance program as a user/fabricator of Type B shipping containers. NRC staff also informed I⁴ of the potential need for an emergency plan, environmental assessment, decommissioning funding plan and financial assurance.

Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research
Items of Interest
Week Ending January 7, 2000

Report on the Technical Basis for the Revision of Regulatory Guide 1.92

In response to a program office user need request, the Engineering Research Applications Branch (RES/ERAB) recently completed a project to develop the technical basis for the revision of Regulatory Guide 1.92, "Combining Modal Responses and Spatial Components in Seismic Response Analysis." The final report, NUREG/CR-6645, "Reevaluation of Regulatory Guidance on Modal Combination Methods for Seismic Response Spectrum Analysis," was published in December 1999. Revision 1 to Regulatory Guide 1.92, which was published in February 1976, contains excessive conservatism and does not reflect the state of the art. A draft technical position for a proposed Revision 2 of Regulatory Guide 1.92 is scheduled to be provided to the program office for review and comment in June 2000. The revised guidance will result in a reduction in estimated seismic loads and thereby may lead to a reduction in the size and number of supports. The modal combination techniques are also applicable for the required dynamic analysis of some non-power reactor regulated facilities.

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Chief Information Officer
Items of Interest
Week Ending January 7, 2000

Freedom of Information and Privacy Act Requests received during the 5-Day Period of
December 31, 1999 through January 6, 2000:

OI reports, 4-1999-036 and 4-1999-033. (FOIA/PA 2000-0088)

Self, allegation file RV-86-A-0106. (FOIA/PA 2000-0089)

NUREG-0800, Draft NRC Standard Review Plan. (FOIA/PA 2000-0090)

Named Individual, NRC sponsored seminar and testing or training session, 7/15/95 through
7/29/95 in Chattanooga, TN. (FOIA/PA 2000-0091)

River Bend Station, investigation RIV-1999-A-0070. (FOIA/PA 2000-0092)

OIG Report 99-08A. (FOIA/PA 2000-0093)

West Valley Demonstration Project, applying license termination rule to project, OGC document
addressing NRC responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act.
(FOIA/PA 2000-0094)

Florida Power and Light Company, OI investigation file 2-1999-008. (FOIA/PA 2000-0095)

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Office of Human Resources
Items of Interest
Week Ending January 7, 2000

Temporary Contractor Support Assistance

Several years ago Federal staffing regulations were changed to permit agencies to contract with private sector companies for temporary help for short-term needs. Consequently, NRC entered into contracts with private sector temporary help companies who provided secretaries with appropriate security clearances on demand. In FY 1998 the private sector temporary support program was terminated for budgetary reasons.

The loss of staffing flexibility resulting from the cancellation of the program was in part offset by HR's Secretarial Pre-Assignment Center (SPAC) program. Under this program, promising secretarial candidates were hired on temporary appointments, provided initial training and orientation, and assigned to offices as needed. However, market conditions have changed. The employment market in the Washington area has become extremely tight. The candidates for the SPAC program are fewer, and in general not as skilled as previous applicants. As a result, the combination of the SPAC program and regular recruiting is not meeting some needs triggered by sudden losses.

Therefore, HR is putting in place a procurement mechanism for obtaining private sector temporary help as a safety net to provide offices secretarial support in emergency situations. Funding for procurements would come on an ad hoc basis from the offices using the service. HR will exercise overall project management responsibility for private sector temporary support services acquired by the Agency. This action does not intend to restore the centrally funded program that was eliminated in the budget process. Rather, it would provide a small vehicle for use in emergency situations and at the expense of the using office. This mechanism will be put in place in the next week or two.

Arrivals		
BELLOSI, Susan	SECRETARY (OA)	OCFO
LU, Shanlai	REACTOR SYSTEMS ENGINEER	RES
MURPHY, Buford	SR PROGRAM ANALYST	OCFO
Retirements		
EATON, Ronald	SR PROJECT MANAGER	NRR
Departures		
FRANKLIN, Dwana	OFFICE ASSISTANT	RIII
LASKINS, Roslyn	SECRETARY (OA)	NRR
LEWIS, Chenita	OFFICE ASSISTANT	RIII

ROBERTS, Cynthia	CLERK	NRR
SAENGRAYIB, Charles	OFFICE ASSISTANT	RIII
SMITH, William*	HEALTH PHYSICIST	RII

* EFFECTIVE 12/31/99

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Office of Public Affairs
Items of Interest
Week Ending January 7, 2000

Media Interest

There were media inquiries regarding Y2K and the Duane Arnold scam.

There was press interest in DOE's activities and Chairman Meserve's news conference in Paducah.

Press Releases	
Headquarters:	
00-5	NRC's Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards Schedules Meeting January 20
00-6	NRC Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste to Meet in Rockville, Maryland, January 13-14
Regions:	
I-00-1	NRC Assigns New Resident Inspector at Ginna Nuclear Plant
III-00-1	NRC Chairman Richard A. Meserve to Hold News Conference on January 7 Following Visit to Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant

Office of International Programs
Items of Interest
Week Ending January 7, 2000

Ted Lazo, NEA

On Monday, January 3, Ted Lazo, Deputy Head, Radiation Protection and Waste Management Division, NEA, met with Commissioner Dicus, Carl Papriello and Don Cool to discuss the low radiation dose issue and the future NEA program of work in the radiation protection area.

Japanese Diet

On Friday, January 7, Mr. Takio Kano, a member of the House of Councilors, Japanese Diet, visited the NRC and met with Commissioners Dicus and McGaffigan. Mr. Kano requested the appointments to introduce himself to the Commission, discuss the September Tokai accident, and Japan's nuclear regulatory reform, and hear from the NRC what it means to be an "independent" regulatory body.

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Office of the Secretary
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Document Released to Public	Date	Subject
Decision Documents		
1. SRM on SECY-99-246	1/5/00	Proposed Guidelines for Applying Risk-Informed Decisionmaking in License Amendment Reviews
Commission Voting Record on 99-246	1/5/00	(same)
2. SECY-99-272	11/23/99	Agreement State Compatibility for Criticality Requirements Applicable to Low-Level Waste Disposal Facilities
SRM on 99-272	1/5/00	(same)
Commission Voting Record on 99-272	1/5/00	(same)
Information Papers		
1. SECY-99-288	12/15/99	Update to the Implementation Plan for the Public Communications Initiative (DSI-14)
2. SECY-99-289	12/20/99	Status Report on Accident Sequence Precursor Program and Related Initiatives

Commission Correspondence

1. Letter to Tennessee Governor Don Sunquist, Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson and Maryland Governor Parris Glendening dated December 22, 1999, concerns the NRC State Liaison Officer program.
2. Letter to Representative Sam Gejdenson dated December 29, 1999, responds to concerns regarding nuclear power plants during the Year 2000 (Y2K) transition.
3. Letter to Dr. Belinda Collins, National Institute of Standards and Technology, dated December 29, 1999, appoints a Standards Executive to serve as the agency representative on the Interagency Committee on Standards Policy under OMB circular A-119, "Federal Participation in the Development and Use of Voluntary Consensus Standards and in Conformity Assessment Activities."
4. Letter to Congressman Markey dated December 29, 1999, responds to concerns regarding a problem involving the control rod position deviation alarm at Indian Point.

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5. Letter to Congressman McIntosh dated December 29, 1999, responds to concerns about substantive changes OMB made to the agency's paperwork submissions.
6. Letter to Ida Castro, Chairwoman, EEOC, dated December 30, 1999, transmits the Affirmative Action Program Plan Update and Report of Accomplishments for Agency With 1001 or More Employees.
7. Letter to Paul Leventhal, Nuclear Control Institute, dated December 30, 1999, responds to concerns regarding the recent advisory issued to operators of nuclear power reactors.

Federal Register Notices Issued

1. Pilot Program Evaluation Panel; Meeting Notice for January 13, 2000.
2. Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards; Meeting Notice for February 3-5, 2000.
3. ACRS Subcommittee on Planning and Procedures; Notice of Meeting on January 27-29, 2000.
4. 10 CFR Part 50; Bob Christie; Receipt of Petition for Rulemaking; PRM-50-68.

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Region I
Items of Interest
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Limerick Unit 2

On December 31, 1999, at 1:11 a.m., Limerick Unit 2 automatically shut down following catastrophic failure of a lightning arrester insulator on the B phase of the main transformer. All plant systems responded to the automatic shutdown as expected.

At 2:55 a.m., PECO declared an Unusual Event because the insulator failure resulted in some visible damage to other permanent equipment within the protected area boundary. At 4:00 a.m., PECO terminated the Unusual Event after determining that the visible damage to other plant equipment was not significant and concluding that the event was not related to a security threat.

PECO determined that the insulator failed while the system dispatcher was performing a routine operation of removing a capacitor bank from service in the switchyard. PECO determined that an arc suppression feature failed on a breaker as it was operated and caused a voltage disturbance which failed the insulator. No damage was found with the B main transformer.

PECO replaced the insulator and repaired the damaged equipment. The reactor was made critical on January 1, 2000, at 8:30 p.m.

The Limerick resident inspector responded to the site following the shutdown. On December 31, 1999, the Regional project engineer for Limerick responded to the Regional Office and reviewed the events with the resident inspector, who had responded to the site. The project engineer subsequently responded to an inquiry about the event from a representative from the Senate Y2K situation room, who was referred by the Headquarters Operations Officer.

The Region I Senior Public Affairs Officer responded to media inquiries. PECO issued a press release immediately following the event indicating that this event was not caused by a Y2K problem.

Yankee Rowe Meeting

On January 5, 2000, Yankee Rowe management and staff met with the Division of Nuclear Materials Safety and Region I staff at the Region I office. The licensee presented updated plans and schedules for future site decommissioning activities at the reactor site in Rowe, MA. The licensee outlined plans to focus on installation of dry cask storage at the site over the next two years and to place decommissioning activities on hold during that time. At the conclusion of the meeting, it was agreed that additional meetings would be held prior to major milestones in the dry cask storage process, such as pad construction, cask fabrication, and fuel transfers.

Westinghouse Waltz Mill Inspection

During the week of January 3, 2000, staff and management from the Division of Nuclear Materials Safety inspected activities at the Westinghouse Waltz Mill site, Madison, PA. This site

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is on the Site Decommissioning Management Plan due to onsite soil and ground water contamination from cleanup efforts after previous incidents at the test reactor. The inspection included the test reactor and decommissioning efforts inside the reactor building, and the outdoor basin areas planned for remediation in the Spring of 2000. The licensee has submitted an amendment to their license for approval to remove the bulk of the contaminated soil, and continue their pump-and treat activities of the contaminated groundwater.

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Region II
Items of Interest
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Closed Pre-decisional Enforcement Conferences - Allegheny Wireline Services

On January 5, the Region held two, closed pre-decisional enforcement conferences with Allegheny Wireline Services and an individual employed by the facility. The purpose of the enforcement conferences was to discuss apparent deliberate violations relating to adequate oversight of the completion of radiation surveys and radiation survey records for well logging operations. The licensee and individual discussed causes and corrective actions for the violations.

West Virginia University Pre-decisional Enforcement Conference

On January 7, the Region held an open, pre-decisional enforcement conference with West Virginia University. The purpose of the enforcement conference was to discuss six apparent violations associated with the university's NRC radioactive materials license, including failure to adequately secure licensed material.

Duke Energy Corporation - Catawba Management Meeting

On January 6, at the request of the Catawba Nuclear Plant, an announced closed meeting was held with Region II to discuss the Catawba Security equipment performance indicator for Calendar Year 1999. The licensee developed the results for this performance indicator from past security equipment history. The licensee plans to submit the data to NRC in preparation for the start of the new reactor oversight process at the Catawba site in April 2000.

Region III
Items of Interest
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Meeting with American Electric Power Company

The Regional Administrator and members of the regional and Headquarters staffs met with American Electric Power Company officials on January 6, 2000, at the D. C. Cook plant to review the status of plant activities leading to the restart of Unit 2. The meeting covered the licensee's program for preparing reactor operators for the restart and operation of the plant. The Region III staff also summarized the findings of six recent NRC inspections at the plant.

Public Workshop on Pilot Reactor Inspection and Assessment Program

On January 5, 2000, members of the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation and the regional staff conducted a public workshop in Red Wing, Minnesota, to obtain public comments on the pilot reactor inspection and assessment program at the Prairie Island Nuclear Power Station.

Chairman Richard Meserve Visits to Fuel Facilities

On January 6, 2000, NRC Chairman Richard Meserve visited the Honeywell Uranium Conversion Plant in Metropolis, Illinois. The following day Dr. Meserve and William D. Travers, Executive Director for Operations, visited the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant in Paducah, Kentucky. They were accompanied by members of the Region III and Headquarters staffs and the resident inspectors.

Region IV
Items of Interest
Week Ending January 7, 2000

DEDM Visit

On January 5 and 6, 2000, the Deputy Executive Director for Management Services, the Directors of the Offices of Human Resources, Administration and Small Business and Civil Rights, along with John Craig and Kathryn Greene of the EDO's Office visited Region IV. They conducted a series of meetings with regional staff and management regarding issues under their purview. The information exchange in both directions was enlightening.

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