NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NEW REACTOR CONSTRUCTION INSPECTION CENTER TO BE ESTABLISHED IN NRC'S ATLANTA REGIONAL OFFICE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission plans to establish a dedicated organization in its Region II office in Atlanta to be the center of all inspection activity for expected new nuclear power plants.

The Construction Inspection Program will be responsible for day-to-day onsite inspections and specialized inspection resources supporting the agency's oversight of any new nuclear power plant construction for the entire country. The Commission has given the Atlanta office's Regional Administrator, William Travers, the responsibility of managing the program's inception, while maintaining the office's focus on ensuring safe operation of nuclear power plants in the region.

"This approach will make sure inspection methods are consistent across the country, and allow us to quickly incorporate lessons learned into the entire program," said NRC Chairman Nils J. Diaz. "Thorough inspections will help ensure any new nuclear power plants are built to meet our requirements for protecting the public's health and safety."

The Commission has directed the NRC's Executive Director for Operations, Luis Reyes, to review the program at least annually to ensure that the safety oversight of operating facilities is not adversely affected and to consider alternatives, as appropriate, to address developments in the actual construction of new facilities. The NRC is expecting several applications for new nuclear power plants in late 2007 and early 2008, with construction activities possible after significant agency review. The agency is currently evaluating and planning the resources and staffing needed to implement the inspection program.

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