



NRC NEWS

**U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, REGION III**

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NRC STAFF COMPLETES SAFETY REVIEW OF DESIGN ISSUE AT PRAIRIE ISLAND NUCLEAR POWER STATION

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has determined a recently identified design problem to be of "low to moderate safety significance" at the Prairie Island Nuclear Power Station near Red Wing, Minnesota. The two-reactor facility is operated by Nuclear Management Company.

An NRC inspection in October and November found that certain components in the cooling water system for plant equipment might not function under external conditions affecting the plant, like an earthquake or a loss of electrical power. The components in question lubricate and cool bearings in three pumps in the system.

The pumps provide cooling water to equipment that is needed for the safe operation and shutdown of the plant. The design problems would not affect normal operation of the equipment.

The inspection determined that the electrical power supply and the water source for the specific components did not meet the requirements for safety-related equipment to assure they will operate under adverse and abnormal conditions.

The NRC's review classified the design problems as a "white" finding, meaning they were of "low to moderate safety significance." The NRC uses a four-category rating system for its inspection findings; from green, through white and yellow, to red, depicting increasing safety significance.

A "white" finding requires the company to take necessary corrective actions and leads to additional NRC inspection oversight in the area of the finding. The utility subsequently corrected the cooling water system deficiencies.

The NRC staff also issued a Notice of Violation to the company. No fine was proposed.

Details of the inspection findings are available on the NRC web site at:
<http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/ASSESS/REPORTS/prai_2000013.pdf>.

Additional information on the NRC's reactor inspection and assessment program is on the web site at: <<http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/index.html>>.

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