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George

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A. Blough

A Letter from Chris Bakken: Last Week's NRC Meeting

Last Wednesday we met with the NRC in a public meeting and discussed our plans for improving the performance at Salem and Hope Creek. Overall, the meeting went well. We outlined our plans to improve our performance, as well as our key metrics we will use to track our progress in creating a strong safety conscious work environment. After the discussion, representatives from the public and the NRC gave their impression of our performance and plans.

While the NRC was pleased we would be sharing our metrics publicly so they could track our progress, they expressed significant concern about our procedure adherence. They pointed to numerous examples in the various assessments where we made a procedure change on the spot to resolve an issue, which might otherwise have affected our performance. I agree this is an area we need to address promptly, and I have asked that it be addressed by the end of this week. Procedure adherence is a basic standard that we must follow and it has to be reinforced at all levels in our organization.

The expectation is simple. We need to follow the procedure as written. If we cannot, we need to place the plant or equipment in a safe condition and have the procedure corrected. Make no mistake; I do not want anyone to feel they can work around a procedure deficiency.

Those from the public who spoke at the meeting were skeptical about our chances of being successful. They've heard all the plans and promises before; however, they also acknowledged what makes this time different from the others. This time we'll present our metrics for the public to see and monitor. With the public watching, our plans and promises can't and won't be empty. The only way we'll convince people we've improved is by delivering on our promises and showing the results.

Two reporters covered the meeting, one from the Sunbeam and another from Platts, an industry news agency. The day after the meeting, Carl Fricker, Jim Hutton and I took the reporter from Inside the NRC on a tour of the station.

I think the reporter was pleased we took time for him and with our candor. Coming out of Hope Creek, we had a difficult time getting past the Rad Monitors. Out of the six of us on the tour, five of us, including the reporter, had to have our shoes wiped down to remove some contamination we picked up from the Refuel Floor. I don't know if this impacted the reporter's story, but the Radiation Protection employees who helped us out at the Control Point were top notch. Although I wasn't pleased with the contamination, how it was handled demonstrated the personal responsibility and ownership we have for our station.

Unfortunately, during the tour, I overlooked something that has been bothering me since I let it happen. Heading up to the refuel floor at Hope Creek, the elevator opened with two technicians already on board. Rather than complete their rounds, I watched the technicians get off so our tour

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group could get on. It wasn't until after the doors closed that I realized what happened. Their supervisor asked them to step off so our group wasn't delayed, being on a tight schedule.

There's no doubt that stakeholder management is important. Although I do appreciate the courtesy shown to us, I don't want to establish the impression or expectation that my visitors or me need any special treatment. The fact is we all have jobs to do and my time is no more important than anyone else's. I have since reached out to the two employees and hope they accept my apology.

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