



NRC NEWS

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NRC ENDS LICENSE FOR SAXTON EXPERIMENTAL FACILITY, RELEASES SITE FOR UNRESTRICTED USE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has granted the request of Saxton Nuclear Experimental Corporation (SNEC) and GPU Nuclear to terminate the license for the Saxton nuclear facility, which closed permanently in May 1972. The NRC has determined the site is safe for unrestricted use. The facility was located in Bedford County, Penn., about 30 miles southeast of Altoona.

Saxton began operations in November 1961, primarily to research various aspects of power reactor technology and to train personnel. Saxton had a net thermal power output of 23.5 megawatts. After Saxton ceased operations, its spent fuel was shipped to the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site. Limited decommissioning took place at Saxton from 1972 to 1974, and the site was monitored until 1987. Support buildings and structures were decontaminated and removed between 1987 and 1992, and full-scale decommissioning started in 1998.

SNEC and GPU Nuclear submitted a license termination plan to the NRC for Saxton in February 2000, and conducted cleanup and decommissioning activities until September 2005. Decommissioning activities included dismantlement of the reactor and decontamination. On Sept. 15, the licensees submitted an application to the NRC to terminate its license, indicating that they had completed radiological decommissioning and that final radiation surveys of the site show that it meets NRC criteria for decommissioning and release for unrestricted use.

NRC conducted a number of on-site inspections of the licensee's actions during the decommissioning process to verify that decommissioning and cleanup were being conducted as described in the license termination plan and to evaluate the quality of this activity. The agency also conducted independent measurements to verify the company's final radiation surveys. NRC has concluded that (1) dismantlement and decontamination activities were performed in accordance with the approved license termination plan, and (2) the final radiation surveys and associated documentation demonstrate the facility and site have met the criteria for decommissioning in Part 20 of the Commission's regulations. Therefore, the license has been terminated.

NRC Commissioner Jeffrey S. Merrifield spoke at the public event marking the Saxton license termination, and his remarks will be available on the NRC Web site at this address:

<http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/commission/speeches/2005/> .

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