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**Date:** 4/16/04 1:45PM  
**Subject:** Fwd: Vermont Yankee News Release

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April 16, 2004

#### Vermont Yankee Identifies Hairline Cracks in Steam Dryer

Brattleboro, VT -- Vermont Yankee outage workers have identified minor hairline cracking in the plant's steam dryer -- a component used to remove moisture from steam produced in the plant's reactor. The condition, which has no impact on nuclear safety, was discovered in a comprehensive inspection conducted by the General Electric company, Vermont Yankee's original designer, after similar conditions were found at other U.S. boiling water reactors. A Nuclear Regulatory Commission inspector has performed a review of the inspection results.

Based on engineering evaluations, two weld sections -- each about three inches long -- were removed and rewelded. As a conservative measure, those two locations, and two similar locations -- all in low stress areas -- were stiffened with plate steel. The inspection also identified two other hairline cracks, one 14 inches long and one three inches long, which were evaluated and found to be inconsequential because they are in a part of the dryer that is under very low stress and they have no effect on dryer performance. These will be monitored in place as part of the routine high-resolution visual inspections that are done during future refueling outages.

The steam dryer was subject to comprehensive visual inspection during this outage because other U.S. plants had identified steam dryer cracking associated with an increase in plant power output as proposed by Vermont Yankee.

Entergy Vermont Yankee Site Vice President Jay Thayer said the cracks were not in the areas of the steam dryer that had presented problems at other plants. "These were in non-stressed areas of the dryer that are not exposed to heavy steam flows. In fact, the components of the dryer that carry most of the load -- the ones that presented problems at other plants -- are in good shape. However, in accordance with our uprate engineering analysis, those will be replaced with heavier steel plates."

Besides the repairs and strengthening done to these welds, the preplanned outage schedule includes reinforcing the dryer in several other areas based on the experience of similar boiling water reactors that have increased their power output.

The repairs, which will not affect the length of the outage, are designed to ensure the continued reliability of the steam dryer and the continued reliability of Vermont Yankee with increased power output.

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