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Nuclear plant passes NRC probe



DTH/ANDREW SYNOWIEZ

The Shearon Harris Nuclear Power Plant was cleared by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission after an investigation regarding unscheduled reactor shutdowns.

LOCAL GROUP CONCERNED PROBLEMS WILL PERSIST DESPITE NRC FINDINGS

BY DAN SCHWIND
STAFF WRITER

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission cleared Shearon Harris Nuclear Power Plant of all operational infractions after investigations into unscheduled reactor shutdowns.

According to a report released Friday, the NRC thought the plant's internal investigation of the shutdowns, or trips, was adequate and required no additional action.

"We were generally satisfied with their identification of the problems," said Roger Hannah, public affairs spokesman for the NRC. "There is no definite timetable (to fix problems), but most of the improvements have already been put into effect."

The inspection, conducted Sept. 15 to 19,

was a supplement to the annual evaluation and was sparked by the plant's four trips between May and August.

It was designed to examine "problem identification, root cause and ... corrective actions (the plant has taken)," the report stated.

According to the report, Carolina Power & Light Company, the licensee and owner of Shearon Harris, "took prompt corrective action" to repair or replace equipment directly involved in the incidents.

Jim Warren, executive director of the North Carolina Waste Awareness and Reduction Network, said he is not convinced that the report will end the plant's problems. "There's not a clear indication that the problem has been solved," Warren said.

Warren said that despite the evaluation, he thinks more must be done to figure out the exact cause of the trips and how to stop future ones.

"This plant has 10 times the industry average (of trips)," he said. "The average is one (trip) per 27 months. ... Shearon Harris has had eight in 16 months."

N.C. WARN's biggest concern remains the plant's cooling system, which was not involved in any of the trips. The group is somewhat concerned, however, that shutdowns could affect the cooling systems and the cooling pools outside for spent rods.

"(The investigation) is the kind of thing that brings that problem back into focus," Warren said.

The investigation was the latest of several examinations this year focusing on the plant's

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Council sees little student interest

Students rarely seek local office

BY LAURA HIRST
STAFF WRITER

While the number of students enrolled at the University is equivalent to about half the population of Chapel Hill, only one undergraduate has ever served on the Chapel Hill Town Council. In 1991, Mark Chilton, then a 21-year-old senior, became the youngest person ever elected to public office in North Carolina. In 1973 law student Gerry Cohen became the first student elected to the Chapel Hill council.

This year, senior Mike McSwain is drawing political attention back to students by competing for one of the four open council seats.

"When I filed for office, every voter in Chapel Hill would have said I was the least likely to win," Chilton said. "Because of what I did, everybody has got to take Michael McSwain a lot more seriously."

Chilton said he was successful because he did not focus purely on student issues such as the noise ordinance or open container law.

Despite a voter registration drive and shuttles running to voting sites, Chilton estimated that only about 600 students voted for him that year. That was still enough because he beat the candidate in fifth place by 463 votes.

This year's voter registration drive, spearheaded by student government, registered nearly 2,300 students to vote in Orange County.

Although it was the biggest student registration drive in University history, council member Mark Kleinschmidt, who worked on Chilton's campaign, said it is still low when compared to the University's total enrollment.

Even 10 percent of the registered students actually voting would be a victory, he said.

He said Chilton won because he was able to reach out to the town for the majority of his 3,012 votes. "There really isn't such a thing as a student vote because so many students don't believe they're important," Kleinschmidt said.

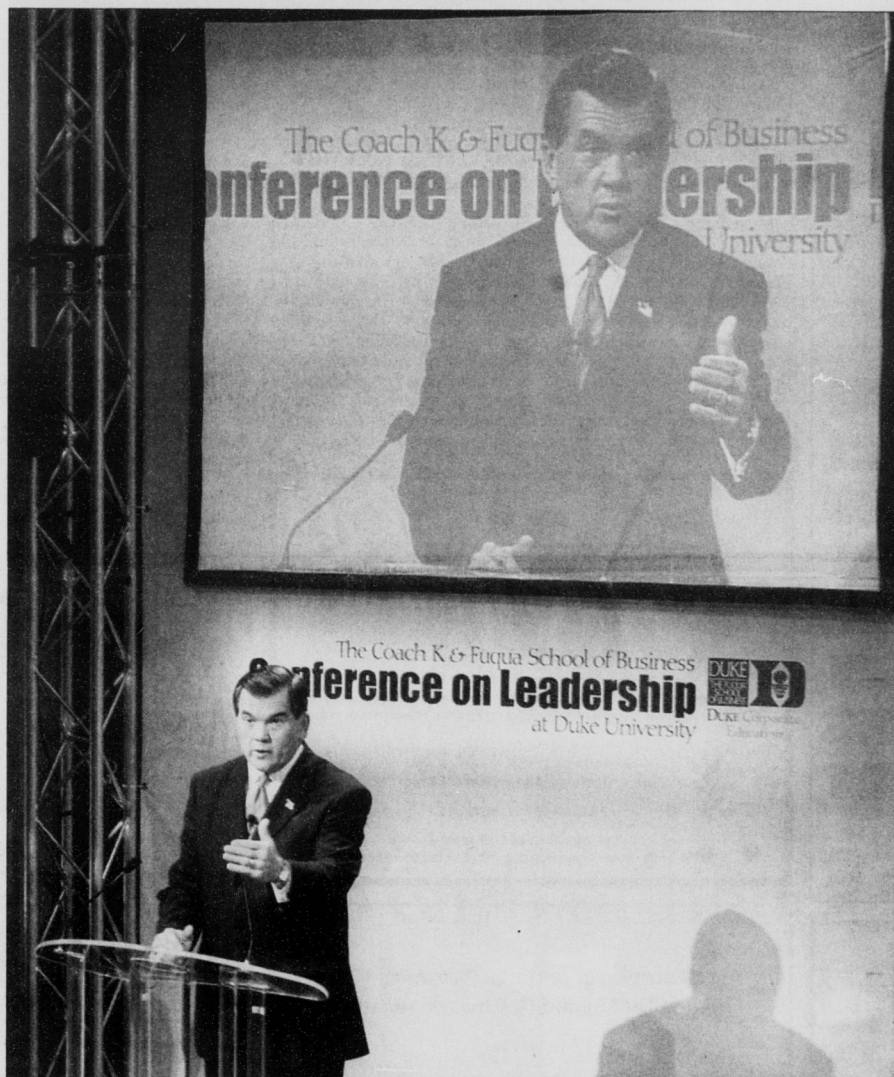
Council member Pat Evans said she thinks a student would be "a breath of fresh air" for the council.

But Jeffrey Obler, a Chapel Hill resident since 1968, said older residents might doubt a student's concern for schooling and tax issues.

Zack Medford, a junior at N.C. State University, lost his bid for a seat on Raleigh's City Council earlier this fall. He said he spent about 75 percent of his time talking to students but would change

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RIDGE SPEAKS AT DUKE



DTH PHOTOS/LEAH LATELLA

U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge speaks Monday afternoon at the Coach K and Fuqua School of Business Conference on Leadership at Duke University. Below: Former NBA player David Robinson (left) speaks with Ridge.

DEFINING LEADERS

BY ELLIOTT DUBE
ASSISTANT STATE & NATIONAL EDITOR

DURHAM — While Tom Ridge served as an infantry staff sergeant in Vietnam, his father sent him one letter per day, including a play-by-play account of the Super Bowl.

Since then, Ridge has served in Congress and as governor of Pennsylvania and now serves as secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.

As the keynote speaker at the Coach K & Fuqua School of Business Conference on Leadership at Duke University, he told an audience Monday about his main source of inspiration in becoming a leader.

"No man had a more profound effect on who I am and what I've accomplished than my father," he said.

He said the essence of leadership is very personal and is "really about what you make it and how you choose to define it." True leaders learn to enjoy facing challenges and not to be encumbered by them, he added.

In his speech, Ridge referred occasionally to the Duke men's basketball team, especially coach Mike Krzyzewski.

While titles alone generally don't convey leadership, Ridge said, "Coach K" is one of the few names that commands immediate respect.

He said former Duke star Christian Laettner, by hitting a now legendary shot against the University of Kentucky in 1992, proved to be a good team leader by recognizing his status as Krzyzewski's go-to player.

Ridge also pointed to leadership on a larger scale, commending President Bush for supporting the war on terror. Ridge said that the president has demonstrated a bold kind of leadership that has been appropriate for the



situation and that Bush has recognized the need to "go big."

Prior to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, collecting 180,000 government employees and forming the Homeland Security Department would have been "intellectually provocative," Ridge said. But the agency has been successful in disrupting terrorist networks in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks, he added.

The safety of the United States should be the priority of every state, city, neighborhood and home, he said. But Ridge said his department has much more work to do in securing the nation.

In a press conference, he addressed questions about a Guilford College student who told officials that he had placed banned

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Student charged in air breach

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Transportation Security Administration said it will make changes to ensure potential threats to aviation security are flagged and investigated earlier.

The moves are the result of actions by a 20-year-old student who was able to sneak box cutters and other banned items past security checkpoints and onto commercial planes. Nathaniel Heatwole, a junior at Guilford College in Greensboro, said he did so to expose holes in aviation security.

He was charged with taking a dangerous weapon aboard an aircraft and was released without bail for a preliminary hearing Nov. 10.

Heatwole sent the TSA an e-mail identifying himself and outlining what he had done, even leaving a phone number for authorities to call. But the items he had hid on two Southwest Airlines planes weren't found for almost five weeks.

"No one needed to connect the dots, TSA just needed to call back the college student," said Rep. Ed Markey, D-Mass., senior Democrat on the Select Committee on Homeland Security.

TSA spokesman Mark Hatfield said the TSA is reviewing procedures to see what can be improved.

"Following an event like this, the results usually include adjustments and improvements in the procedures," he said.

The TSA Contact Center was set up in May as a clearinghouse for communications. When an overt threat is received, operators are trained to notify a TSA investigator or security official, who then decides what to do with it — for example, refer it to the FBI, Hatfield said.

The center fields about 5,700 complaints, queries, compliments and threats each day. Heatwole's e-mail did not fall into the "overt" category because he never

SEE HEATWOLE, PAGE 4

Locals work to remedy health woes

BY EMILY VASQUEZ
STAFF WRITER

Fifteen hundred Hispanic residents of the Triangle region traveled to Eastway Elementary School in Durham on Oct. 11 with one thing in mind: their health.

Access to health care in the United States has been a hot topic for years, but the response to El Centro Hispano's 2003 Latino Health Fair demonstrated that the issue is of particular concern among Hispanics in this region.

The Hispanic community faces significant barriers to health care accessibility. At the same time, they are at increased risk of disease and injury due to a widespread lack of preventative care, increased levels of poverty and frequent exposure to hazardous labor.

Ivan Parra, former director of El Centro Hispano, identified the key obstacle to health care among Hispanics as a lack of knowledge about the system.

"Many people come from rural areas where there are antiquated health systems," he said. "They don't know where to go or what can wait to be treated."

Community leaders are working to raise awareness through events such as the Latino Health Fair. However, once Hispanics become more "health care literate," they face the question of how to pay for serv-

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INSIDE

LIKE A PRAYER

The PlayMakers' production of "A Prayer for Owen Meany," translates well to the stage PAGE 3



SPORTS

KILLER MOVES

UNC libero Caroline deRoeck scored the game-winning kill in game two against Duke. PAGE 7

WEATHER

TODAY Mostly sunny, H 81, L 52
WEDNESDAY Mostly sunny, H 67, L 40
THURSDAY Mostly sunny, H 64, L 35

