

Regulation slows down nuclear industry

By JEANNIE FARIS
Staff Writer

In 1978, the Carolina Power & Light Co. began construction of its Shearon Harris Nuclear Power Plant about 20 miles southwest of Raleigh.

Eight years later, plant officials are loading fuel into the reactor while awaiting a full-power operation license from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

The Harris plant is one of 20 plants that applied for NRC permits in the late 1970s and are still incomplete or await operation licenses, said NRC spokeswoman Sue Gagner.

Eight years is not unusually long for nuclear power plant construction and licensing, she said, adding that since the late 1970s, only two plants have received full-power operation licenses.

Lengthy delays in construction and licensing and the absence of building requests have resulted from a combination of events, industry officials said.

"The accident at Three Mile Island and the subsequent onslaught of nuclear regulation have been highly contributive to the licensing delays. The process itself has become fairly drawn out," said Cynthia Tulley, regulatory activities project manager for the Atomic Industries Forum

based in Maryland.

CP&L spokesman Roger Hannah agreed, saying that delays resulted primarily from the NRC regulations requiring the utility companies to conduct numerous studies and evaluations during the construction process.

The entire process requires the NRC to monitor constantly the construction and test results before granting the 15 licenses and permits and 60 regulatory approvals, Hannah said. After utilities have received the initial licenses for construction, they must conduct or oversee environmental studies.

The next stage of the process requires the utility company to begin pre-operational testing of the facility before contacting the NRC to request a low power testing permit at 5 percent of the plant's capabilities. The Harris plant received this permit Jan. 24.

Gagner said that two stages of public hearings are also essential in the licensing process, including participation of the NRC technical staff, the applicant utility company and any other interested groups. The first hearing is mandatory, and the utility company must hold it before the NRC grants the low-power license. The second hearing generally occurs before the operating license

is granted, but is not mandatory, she said.

"Some plants have had hearings if the opposition has been strong, in an effort to discuss complicated and involved situations where people intervene. It is not unusual," Gagner said.

Tulley agreed that public opposition can significantly delay the construction and licensing of nuclear power plants. "Depending on the level of involvement of the public and how long it takes to get issues to be resolved, the length of licensing is affected," she said.

CP&L has encountered opposition from the Coalition for Alternatives to Shearon Harris, but Hannah said that the opposition had not been unusually severe. "We haven't had as much opposition as some have had. We have been open and tried to explain what's going on in all stages of the construction and testing," he said.

CASH spokesman Wells Eddleman said that delays occurred because the CP&L service area did not really need the plant.

"That's the most delayed (plant) that we're aware of in the United States, and not a bit is due to citizen action," he said.

Hannah attributed the halt of requests for nuclear power plant

construction permits since the 1970s to the uncertainty of the regulatory environment.

"No one is willing at this point to build more nuclear plants. But in our service area, energy use will continue to grow," Hannah said.

Tulley said economic conditions could have a large impact on nuclear power plant construction. When the building and licensing requests flourished in the 1970s, the energy crisis was at a peak and the nation was increasingly dependent upon oil imports for its energy needs.

But by the 1980s, the oil crisis had passed, and energy demand had decreased, so utility companies are now less likely to risk the construction costs of nuclear power plants.

Eddleman said that the unpopularity of nuclear waste management and radiation exposure have given nuclear power plants bad publicity.

He said that nuclear power is a risky investment. "Nuclear power is the only technology where you can lose a billion-dollar plant in an afternoon," he said.

But CP&L is pressing ahead with fuel loading and pre-operational systems testing to ensure that the equipment is safe and efficient while it is awaiting the full-power license from the NRC, Hannah said.

Gunshots fired from car kill president of Renault in Paris

From Associated Press reports

PARIS — Georges Besse, president of the state-run Renault automobile company, was shot to death Monday night near his home in Paris, officials said.

The 58-year-old Besse was felled by several gunshots about 8:25 p.m. on Boulevard Edgar Quinet, almost in front of his home.

The Agence France Presse news agency said Besse was shot by a man and a woman passing by in a car.

No more U.S. arms for Iran?

WASHINGTON — President Reagan said Monday he has "absolutely no plans" to send more arms to Iran, although his spokesman said the president's authorization for the weapons shipments technically remained in effect.

As he posed for pictures at the start of a meeting with Argentine President Raul Alfonsin, Reagan was asked if there would be more U.S. arms shipments to Iran like those he confirmed last week after numerous published reports of secret U.S.-Iranian dealings.

"We have absolutely no plans

News in Brief

to do any such thing," Reagan told reporters. Nor, he said, would he be firing Secretary of State George Shultz or any other top foreign policy advisers as a result of public controversy over the covert operation.

Astronauts start shuttle drills

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — Astronauts will board a space shuttle Tuesday for the first time since the Challenger accident for a practice countdown that will help launch teams maintain proficiency during a long flightless period.

The drills will conclude seven weeks of launch pad tests for Atlantis, which will be moved back to a hangar on Saturday.

The exercises mark the last chance that astronauts and launch teams will have to sharpen their skills with a shuttle on the pad until Discovery is rolled out of storage to be readied for the next shuttle launch, now set for Feb. 18, 1988.

Drought dries farmers' profits

By JANET GOLDEN
Staff Writer

When the drought hit in late spring of this year, there wasn't much that the state and federal governments could do for farmers hit by it, according to state officials.

North Carolina's corn farmers were affected the most, said Cheryl Fox of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Crop and Livestock Reporting Service in Raleigh. Corn farmers harvested an average of one ear per stalk this fall, she said, when there are normally two or three.

Tobacco farmers were also hit hard by the drought, yielding the lowest crop since 1934, she said.

Because of the low water level in lakes, there was no place from which water could be irrigated to farms, she said.

James Wilder, executive vice president of the N.C. Soybean Growers Association, agreed that

nothing could be done once the drought had begun.

"It was the kind of situation where everyone looks up at the sun and says, 'Golly, when will it ever rain?'" he said.

Wilder said the State Department of Agriculture had done all it could to help farmers. Although the U.S. Department of Agriculture could have made grants to crop farmers for financial assistance under the 1985 Federal Farm Bill, it did not, he said.

Many soybean farmers were affected by the drought, particularly in the Piedmont and in the western part of the state, he said.

"A lot of farmers planted one, two, three times and never got a crop," he said.

The hay shipments over the summer to N.C. farmers from other states were not widely beneficial, Wilder said. "As noble as (the effort)

was, it only helped livestock farmers," he said.

However, he added that the soybean crop across the state was not much below normal this year.

David Epperson, researcher for the North Carolina Climate Program at N.C. State University, said that the long-term drought, which has accumulated since 1984, is not over. He estimated that rainfall is about one foot below normal now.

Charles Matthews of the National Weather Service at RDU said that North Carolina is still in "a state of moderate drought."

Marketing experts to talk at University for MBA career day

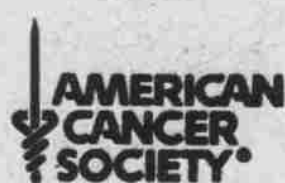
The UNC MBA School will be sponsoring a "Marketing Careers Day" from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Wednesday in the second floor of the Kenan Center.

Marketing experts from many U.S. corporations will be on hand at the Kenan Center to talk to MBA students interested in marketing.

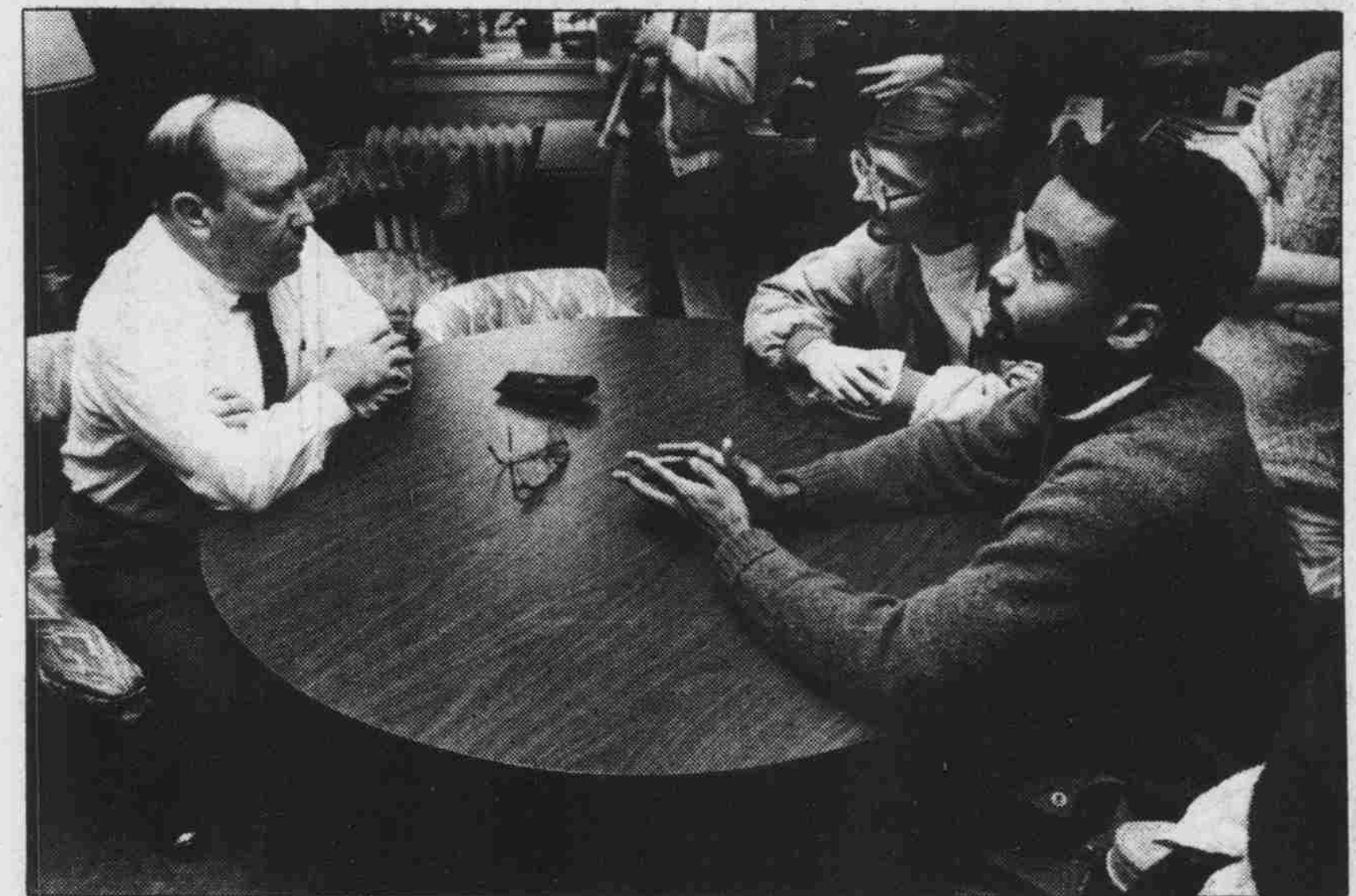
Richard Dedrick, vice president of marketing for the James River Corp., will be the guest speaker at 2:30 p.m. in room 204 of the Kenan Center.

The program is sponsored by the UNC MBA Marketing Club, and is open to all MBA students.

Babies Don't Thrive in Smoke-filled Wombs



AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY



Robert Reid-Pharr (far right) and Matt Bewig present a proposal to erect the shanties to Donald Boulton

Shanty

to ask the police not to arrest the students waiting outside.

While negotiations continued in Steele Building, about 40 students gathered in the rain for an impromptu debate about divestment between group members and other students.

"If we force companies to pull out we won't have any influence in there anymore," said Bill Peaslee, chairman of the College Republicans. He

said divestment would cause South African blacks more problems.

Eric Walker, group member and vice president of UNC's Black Student Movement, replied that only 1 percent of blacks in South Africa are now employed, and that their situation could not get much worse. "If you thrust your hand into a 300-degree flame and somebody turns it up to 500 degrees, does it hurt any more?" he asked.

1 p.m. Group member Marguerite Arnold came from Steele Building to say that Boulton needed about 15 more minutes. "It looks very favorable," she said.

1:30 p.m. Student negotiators said they would have to wait until 2 p.m., because Boulton said he needed to "touch base" with other administrators, including Susan Ehringhaus, assistant to the chancellor.

Students continued to wait while their numbers dwindled. Hahamovitch passed around a yellow legal pad for students to sign up to stay in the shanty. The 2 p.m. deadline passed.

2:30 p.m. The student negotiators emerged from Steele Building with smiles on their faces, giving the thumbs-up sign to their counterparts outside.

"They have seen the logic of allowing us to put up the shanties,"

Reid-Pharr announced to cheers from students. "So we're going to build a shanty."

3 p.m. The shanty's construction was completed. A black sign reading "Making Those Killer Bucks" was hung inside, while "UNC Divest Now!" was spray-painted in gold on one of the shanty's walls.

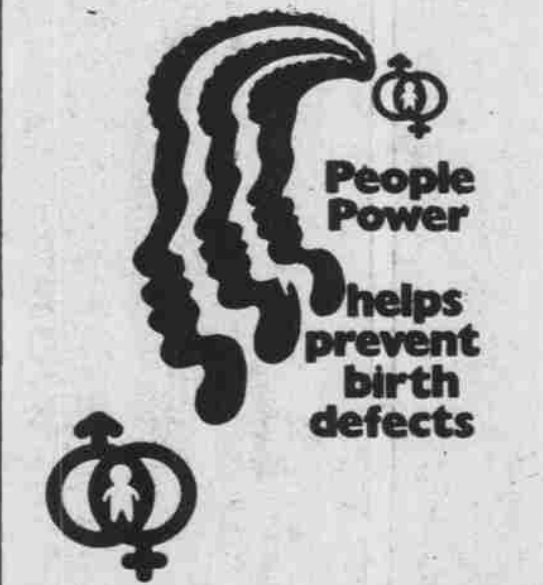
Boulton said he made his decision alone. "I understand where they're coming from and their deep concerns," he said.

The students discussed the issue responsibly, Boulton said. "There was a sense of reasonableness," he said. "We must preserve the right of reasonable protest."

Most students in Polk Place Monday agreed that building the shanty was a good idea.

"This is a legitimate and effective way for students to express their views," Student Body President Bryan Hassel said after Boulton's decision. "If anything, it's just going to remind administrators and the public that it's the students who have kept the issue alive."

But Peaslee said that if the shanty remains for long, the College Republicans might build a "Berlin wall" to protest the shanty, as they did last year to protest the support group's shanties. "It violates my right to a beautiful campus," he said.



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