

CP&L's Unit 1 Could Restart Early After Scheduled Outage

BY TERRY POPE

Carolina Power and Light Co. officials say plans to start up a second reactor unit at the Brunswick nuclear plant in Southport are running about four days ahead of schedule.

Unit 2 at the plant is already running at 100 percent capacity, and Unit 1 should start up around Feb. 23. Both units were taken out of commission last August by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission after mistakes by two licensed control room operators led to an automatic shut down.

"This has been a very major outage, but it has gone very well," said Joseph Harness, plant general manager, during a tour of the plant last week by area news personnel.

Last Wednesday marked the 105th day of a scheduled 150 day outage for Unit 1. During the outage workers are completing 58 scheduled modifications. Riser piping on both reactors was experiencing stress fractures.

Harness said the entire nuclear power industry is having problems with the 12-inch pipes that weigh about a ton each. To prevent future problems with radiation leakage, they had to be replaced. Those on Unit 1 were replaced in 37 days, which is considered a record for the industry, he said.

"With a changing of metals, we don't believe we'll have this problem in the future," said Joe Holder, an assistant plant manager.

The plants were also shut down for several weeks in May after 23 of 47 licensed operators tested by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission failed.

For each day that one of the company's units is shut down, about \$250,000 more in fuel is used at a "fuel-driven plant"—such as one of the company's coal or hydroelectric plants—to provide customers with electricity, Holder said. That cost

"flows right to the customer," he added.

"We just completed, this morning, putting the last bundle in for refueling," Holder said of Unit 1.

Brunswick is the largest of the three nuclear power plants operated by CP&L. It is responsible for 15 percent of the company's total production capacity.

The combined units contain about 537 bundles that serve as fuel rods inside the two boiling water reactors. About a third of the uranium bundles are replaced every 15 months during refueling, which takes about six weeks. A unit must be shut down for refueling. The bundles are about 15-feet long and each weighs about 700 pounds.

The company has kept track of about 4,000 individual items that have undergone repairs during the 150-day outage. Control room operators have also gone back to the training simulator more often, Holder said.

"We did struggle last summer," Holder said. "We now send people back to training more often. We thought we had a good program before, but the conditions change and the requirements change and we got caught up in that."

Every five weeks, control room operators go into 40 to 80 hours of simulator training. Each year, all operators must pass an annual test that Holder said is very strict.

"This site is quality driven," said Jack Spencer, an assistant plant manager.

The Brunswick plant was given a 40-year license to operate. Unit 2 began operations in November 1975 and Unit 1 began in March 1977.

"These plants probably have a much greater life span than 40 years," said Elizabeth Bean, CP&L spokesperson. "The feeling is, why shut them down when you've got a longer life expectancy."



INSIDE THE CONTROL room at the Brunswick nuclear plant in Southport. Plant managers stepped up training for control room operators after 23 of 47 licensed operators failed a test administered by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY CP&L

National Guard Units Seek Support Of Local Community

The role of the Army National Guard and the need for community support of local units will be the topic of a meeting Wednesday, Jan. 30, at 7 p.m. at the National Guard Armory in Shallotte.

Topics covered at the public meeting will include an N.C. Army National Guard mission briefing on "Operation Desert Shield."

Also planned are presentations on the state and federal mission of the N.C. Army National Guard and a National Guard video.

Speakers will discuss the history of the 1st Battalion 120th Mechanized Infantry and the local National Guard unit, as well as benefits provided through membership in the N.C. Army National Guard.

The Shallotte Army National Guard company commander and his staff will be introduced. There will be time for open discussion.

Lt. Col. John T. Hoffman, commander of the 1st Battalion 120th Mechanized Infantry, will be at the meeting. It is one of six such "town meetings" scheduled this month across southeastern North Carolina.

Others speakers will include Lt. Col. Baron G. Hignite, public affairs officer with the N.C. National Guard, and Lt. Col. Coy E. Branch, recruiting and retention manager with the N.C. National Guard.

Terminal Cancels All Sales

All sales of lumber and railroad cross-ties at Military Ocean Terminal, Sunny Point, have been canceled until further notice.

The notice applies to both regular and special sales, said Myrtle D. Meade, public affairs officer.

The notice came just in advance of the Jan. 15 deadline set by the United Nations for Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to withdraw his troops from Kuwait in order to avoid military intervention.

Sunny Point is the largest ammunition port in the free world and is

the only U.S. Department of Defense ammunition terminal specifically designed to handle containerized ammunition shipments. It's 9,250-acre reservation is surrounded by another 7,000 acres of buffer and easement zones.

Cargo arrives at the port by either rail or truck for shipment from the terminal's three 2,200-foot wharves.

The terminal is also responsible for management of Department of Defense cargo going through the State Port Authority facilities at Wilmington and Morehead City.

New Policy To Require Fees For Water Lines

BY TERRY POPE

The board that oversees the county's water expansion projects wants property owners who live in neighborhoods where future main trunk lines are planned to help pay for those lines.

The Utility Operations Board will recommend to Brunswick County Commissioners four possible methods for assessing people who live where main trunk lines are to be installed. Presently, there is no county policy for assessing property owners who live along main distribution lines.

However, persons that live in Special Assessment Districts (SADs) are assessed the cost of running lines from adjacent water mains into their neighborhoods based on either the square footage or road frontage of their lots. SAD water customers think it's unfair that property owners on main lines do not have to pay.

UOB members voted 6-1 Monday, with Richard Trexler objecting, to present four options to county commissioners that would end the "freebies," as one county official said. The board plans to recommend a policy that imposes either a fee or an assessment based on the acreage of the property.

An ad hoc committee of UOB members and Director of Utilities Jerry Webb worked to draw up a

"It gets progressively less costly as the road frontage goes up."

—Robert Nubel, UOB
On acreage fees

plan that would equitably charge the owners of large tracts of land along future water lines. That plan was presented to the full board Monday.

The option UOB members will ask commissioners to adopt charges property owners of large tracts on a rate schedule. If the road frontage exceeds 100 feet, the boundary line for measuring the depth of the property would remain a variable. The greater the road frontage of the lot, the shorter the boundary depth line would extend from the road for determining the square footage to be assessed.

For example, a property owner with a road frontage of 100 feet would also have a boundary line on that property of up to 100 feet. Assessments would be based on a lot of 10,000 square feet. However, a neighbor with a road frontage of 400 feet would have a boundary line on that property of 96 feet, or 28,800 square feet of property liable for assessments or fees.

"It gets progressively less costly as the road frontage goes up," ex-

plained UOB Vice Chairman Robert Nubel.

Board attorney Michael Ramos said if the county adopts a policy to assess property owners then the expansion projects would have to undergo two public hearings. If fees are imposed rather than assessments, only those property owners who desire county water would have to pay the fee in addition to the usual tap-on fees.

Since the county will have already decided where the main trunk lines are to be installed under its capital improvements project, public hearings on assessments "would be a farce," Nubel said.

Planning Director John Harvey said charging land owners along main trunk lines differently from residents in SADs would not become a "double standard." At the UOB's December meeting, Commission Chairman Kelly Holden asked that a policy be recommended to the county for charging residents along main lines an equitable rate.

"This is a progressive step," said

UOB Chairman Al Morrison of Sunset Beach, who was elected Monday to succeed D.V. Jones as board chairman.

"This is an exciting period ahead of us," Morrison said. "There are a lot of things we've got to get done if we're going to stay in existence."

At their Jan. 7 meeting, county commissioners voted to hire Jay Houston and Associates of Shallotte as the engineering firm to design Phases III and III-A of the capital improvements project for the county water system. An estimated \$6 million will be spent in 1991 to extend a main water line from Shallotte to the Seaside area and from N.C. 179 to the Shallotte Point community.

Houston and Associates has also been hired to design SAD 12, the county's latest district which includes 10 subdivisions between Ocean Isle and Calabash to feed off of the water main along N.C. 179.

The county is still negotiating a contract for that project with the engineering firm, Webb told the board Monday. Webb asked that the contract discussion be deleted from the meeting agenda.

In other business, Walter Goldsberry of Gray Bridge Road presented the board with 36 additional names from the Shell Point community that have petitioned the county to become the next SAD.



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