

LEADS NATION IN ENFORCEMENTS

Feds Want Specific Plan To Improve Safety At Brunswick Nuclear Plant

BY ERIC CARLSON

Carolina Power and Light Co. has accepted an offer from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to allow the company another 30 days before submitting a detailed plan to upgrade safety procedures and to correct management deficiencies at the company's Brunswick Nuclear Plant near Southport.

In a strongly worded letter to CP&L last week, the NRC asked the company to include additional information in its requested response to a highly critical May 27 commission review of plant operations.

CP&L had been given 30 days to reply and was preparing to mail its response last Friday, company spokesman Elizabeth Bean said Monday.

But the new NRC letter dated June 23 raised additional safety questions and asked for a more detailed response to the report. It said CP&L could hold off on its reply and add the newly requested information before submitting a response within 30 days.

"They offered us the option of responding separately or combining our response. We intend to respond to both requests together sometime in late July," Bean said.

The latest NRC letter said recent inspection findings and events at the nuclear plant "have not only reinforced, but increased NRC concerns about the material condition of the plant and management effectiveness in controlling the processes and activities" there.

It notes that declining performance and continuing

non-compliance with regulatory requirements at the plant have resulted in "a succession of escalated enforcements over the past two years which has placed the facility in the unenviable position of leading the nation's nuclear power plants in this category."

The NRC has fined CP&L nine times since July 1988 for violating maintenance procedures at the plant.

Both reactor units at the plant were shut down in April after structural problems were found in the diesel generator building that could make it vulnerable to earthquake damage. The generators are needed to power pumps that circulate cooling water through the reactors.

The NRC said the decision to voluntarily shut down the plant and to identify structural problems was a good one, but added that it had "not seen any proposals to rectify these during the current outage."

The plant is expected to remain off line at least until early fall, Bean said Monday. No additional delays are expected due to the latest NRC requests.

Besides correcting structural deficiencies previously noted by the NRC, the company already has begun inspecting other areas of the plant for similar problems. Plant personnel also have been using the shutdown to catch up on a general backlog of maintenance work, Bean said.

In its latest request for a plan to upgrade plant operations, the NRC said CP&L must establish a detailed schedule for corrective actions that can be monitored

and verified for effectiveness.

Concerns that the NRC wants the company to address before either unit returns to service include corrosion and other deficiencies in equipment, backlogs of deferred maintenance, and potential structural deficiencies related to steel, block walls and supports.

During a six-week inspection completed May 1, the NRC found aging equipment, poor maintenance and ineffective work controls at the plant.

Approximately 200 structures and components were found to have inadequate safety margins for earthquake resistance. Many of these deficiencies were more than two years old, including bent, twisted and cracked supports and defective bolts in some building walls.

Inspectors in the emergency diesel generator building found bolt heads that had been cut off and welded to structures to give the appearance of bolts when none existed. Some bolts had been cut short, improperly reducing the threaded length. Others were installed in concrete without the required steel anchor sleeves.

CP&L inspectors recently found similar bolt problems in other areas in the plant, "though not in the amount or safety significance" of those in the generator building. Most of the new problems were in bolts that support equipment, not in structural fasteners, Bean said.

The company has also discovered that some of the structural steel at the plant was not installed as specified in the original blueprints. Bean said the construction was

different but not necessarily less effective than the intended design.

None of the design discrepancies were in the primary structure of the plant, which is constructed of reinforced concrete, Bean said.

The latest in-house inspection also found that some ventilation ducts in the main control building do not meet specifications for withstanding 300 mile-per-hour tornado winds.

No increase in rates is expected to come as a direct result of the current maintenance, Bean said. However an adjustment may be necessary in fall, 1993 if the shutdown leads to significant purchases of power and fuel.

The NRC also wants the company to establish a plan to correct management problems identified during the commission's review of plant operations.

"Management has not set high standards for the material condition of the plant and has not provided the leadership needed for effective implementation of improvements," the inspection report concluded. Lack of critical self-assessment has resulted in the failure to recognize problems and the failure to implement effective corrective actions."

CP&L announced May 14 that it would spend more than \$200 million in an accelerated effort to improve operations and performance at the plant. The company said it did not plan to raise rates to pay for the improvements.

OIB Budget Approved, Tax Hike And All

Despite a three-cent tax increase, the Ocean Isle Beach budget was approved at a June 23 meeting of the town board, with nary a public murmur. The public hearing preceding the meeting was attended by only one resident, who asked only a few benign questions.

The additional pennies had already been explained as a fund strictly for beach renourishment. This portion of the taxes, amounting to a total of about \$92,000, will be placed in a capital project fund, to which another \$80,000 will be added from the accommodation tax. In addition, the board has in the past two years designated about \$98,000 for this project.

Taxes for OIB property owners will now be 20 cents per \$100 property evaluation, providing a tax base for the town of \$307,835,400. Mayor Betty Williamson said she expects collection of these taxes to be very close to 100 percent. "In 1990-91, we collected 100 percent," she said, "and last year, they were 99.3 percent collected."

Williamson reflected on what she called "a very progressive year." She pointed to recent certification of the town's land use plan update by the Coastal Resources Commission, a five percent reduction in flood insurance premiums awarded to property owners, and the receipt of all sewer permits for Phase Two of the sewer system construction. "Bids for this will be let this fall," she said, "and then the system will serve the whole island."

The project that demanded a tax increase, the first since 1986, is the dredging of Shallotte Inlet, an longtime goal of the island community. "It was not feasible for the U.S. Corps of Engineering to do the whole dredging job," Williamson explained, "so the town applied for permits to do it ourselves. That's why we need the money."

The Corps has agreed, however, to do limited dredging of a four-by-36-foot strip of the inlet when it performs its annual maintenance. This will be done at no cost to the town.

"We have now received our permit to do the inlet dredging," Williamson said, "and we plan to do it while the Corps has its equipment here for the maintenance job. That should save some time and money."

New Hours, Personnel At Recycling Sites

In an effort to prevent contamination of recycled goods, Brunswick County will station site managers at its three previously unmanned temporary recycling locations, it was announced this week.

The Northwest Park recycling site on U.S. 74-76 near the overpass of Lanvale Road and Mt. Misery Road will be open Tuesdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The Town Creek Park site on U.S. 17 in Winnabow will be staffed from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

The Waccamaw Park recycling location on N.C. 130 near Waccamaw school will be open Mondays and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

A site manager will be on hand during opening hours to help sort recycleables into proper bins.

All three sites previously were unmanned and accessible seven days a week until 11 p.m. with opening hours of 7 a.m. on weekdays and 8 a.m. Saturdays and Sundays.

County officials say the changes had to be made because new state and federal regulations have tightened controls on foreign materials in recycling bins.

"Unfortunately, we were seeing so much contamination of recycled materials that we didn't have a product we could market," said county Recycling Coordinator Mary McCarley.

A single trash bag included in a bin of recyclable cans could cause the entire load to be rejected, McCarley said.

She hopes that stationing a site manager at each recycling location to oversee dumping and answer questions will alleviate much of the contamination problem. Now all of the county's eight recycling sites will be supervised.

Recycleables also can be taken to the Oxpen convenience station at the intersection of N.C. 130 and Oxpen Road (S.R. 114) or the N.C. 904 convenience station on Seaside Road, south of Grissetown. These sites are open seven days a week until 7 p.m.

The three county transfer stations also have manned recycling centers open Monday through Saturday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The Ocean Isle transfer station is located on Hale Swamp Road (S.R. 1154) off N.C. 179, southwest of

Shallotte.

The Leland transfer station is on Chappell Loop Road (S.R. 1524) next to the wastewater treatment plant in Leland.

The Southport transfer station is at the intersection of N.C. 133 and N.C. 87, next to the Brunswick County Board of Education.

The county plans to open two more recycling locations, one at the county landfill and another on N.C. 211. New signs will be installed soon to direct residents and visitors to the nearest recycling center, McCarley said.

She also hopes to have a mobile recycling trailer for use at festivals and other gatherings. It would also be available to churches, civic groups, clubs and other organizations for special events or recycling programs.

Aluminum cans, newsprint and green, brown and clear glass can be left at the recycling locations. Cans should be rinsed and glossy inserts removed from newspapers.

Glass beverage and food-type containers should be sorted by color and rinsed thoroughly. Labels can be left on, but lids should be discarded.

The recycling centers cannot take plate glass, automotive glass, mirrors, Pyrex, ceramics, clay or light bulbs.

All items brought to the drop centers in plastic or brown paper bags or cardboard boxes should be dumped into the appropriate bins. Bags can be recycled at the grocery store. Boxes should be reused, McCarley advised.

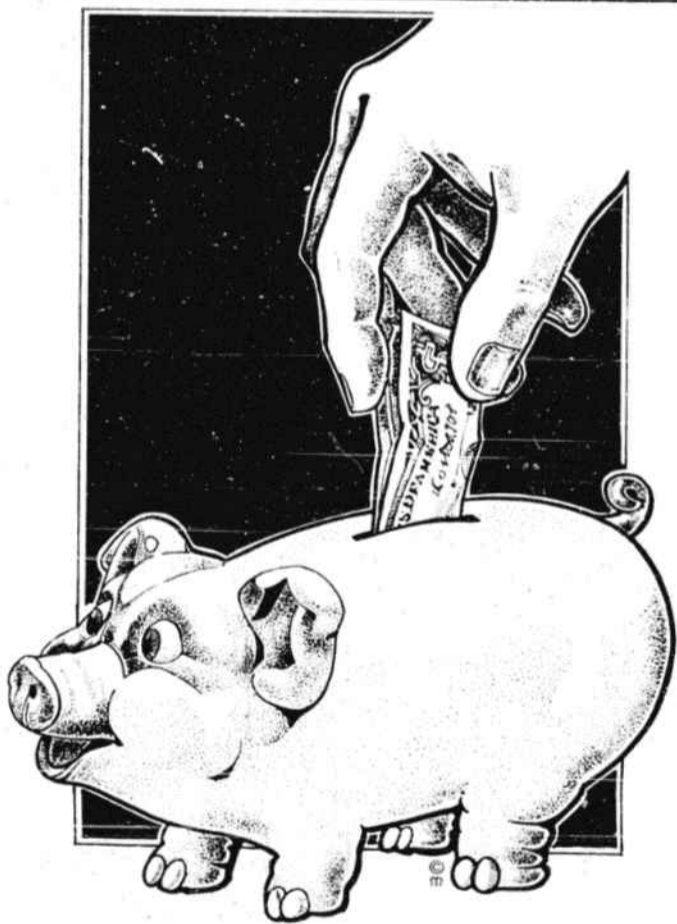
For further information about the county's recycling program, call McCarley at 253-4488.

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- Leland 371-6546
- Shallotte 754-4371
- Calabash 579-3595
- Long Beach 278-6022



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Until further notice, the office will be staffed from 9 am to 1 pm daily to make records available to patients.

Dr. Marcus Williams will be available through the Cape Fear Memorial Hospital for emergencies.

Patients who choose to continue care with Dr. Williams may call 919-791-9924 to make appointments.

Express CARE