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NRC COMPLETES WORK ON PREPARING ITS INTERNAL COMPUTER SYSTEMS FOR YEAR 2000 READINESS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has completed work on all internal computer systems needed to address the Year 2000 problem. The NRC is one of the first of 24 primary Federal agencies whose progress is being tracked by the Office of Management and Budget to complete its Y2K work.

The NRC has repaired or replaced 88 computer systems, tested them, and certified their readiness to operate beyond the Year 2000. This includes systems developed by the NRC or its contractors to support the agency's operation as well as commercial hardware and software for minicomputers, microcomputers, and other agency applications such as security keycard access to NRC offices.

The highest priority was given to the NRC's seven mission-critical systems, each of which has been certified as Y2K-ready. These include the sealed-source and device nationwide registry, the general license database, the licensing tracking system, the NRC's computer network, the emergency telecommunications system, the operations center information management system, and the emergency response data system. Contingency plans have been verified for these systems in case of any failures, including but not limited to failures related to Y2K.

The NRC's work on Year 2000 readiness, begun in 1996, cost about $10 million.

"Our entire Y2K program to address automated systems internal to NRC was completed well ahead of schedule and under budget," NRC Chairman Shirley Ann Jackson said.   "This is attributable to the dedication and spirit of NRC staff and our supporting contractors who used every opportunity to increase efficiency based on lessons learned as our program progressed."

The NRC has fixed all of its mission-critical, business-essential and non-critical systems. Specifically, it has:

- Addressed all mission-critical systems and verified that existing contingency plans for them address any possible system failures (including Y2K-related failures) as well as to cover any business continuity concerns.

- Addressed all non-mission critical systems.

- Resolved all issues related to exchanging data with outside parties.

- Replaced all non-compliant hardware as needed to address the embedded chip problem.

- Tested all telecommunications equipment and replaced non-Y2K compliant components as needed. All NRC telecommunications service providers have stated that they will be Y2K compliant by mid-year.

- Verified that the Y2K problem will not affect systems related to the operation and maintenance of agency buildings.

As an independent verification of the agency's Y2K program effectiveness and accuracy, the NRC Office of Inspector General has conducted ongoing reviews and reported that the agency's Y2K management program was thorough and effective.

Additional information on NRC's Y2K activities is available on its website at http://www.nrc.gov/NRC/NEWS/year2000.

The agency is also working with nuclear power plant and other licensees to ensure Y2K readiness for those systems needed to operate and shut down plants safely, recognizing the importance of electrical grid reliability and to ensure security of radioactive materials.

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