



# NRC NEWS

## U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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### **NRC SCHEDULES MEETING TO DISCUSS STARTUP AND INSPECTION OF LES PLANT**

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has scheduled a meeting in Eunice, N.M., to discuss issues related to the startup of the Louisiana Energy Services gas centrifuge uranium enrichment plant.

That discussion will include the agency's decision to allow the plant to begin operation, the inspections that led to that decision, the operational inspection program and continued construction inspections.

The meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 8, at 6 p.m. MDT in the Eunice Community Center at 906 12th Street in Eunice. There will be brief presentations by the NRC staff and members of the public will have opportunities to make comments or ask further questions of the NRC staff.

The LES URENCO USA Facility, located near Eunice, was granted an NRC license in June 2006. The license allows LES to enrich uranium up to 5 percent of the isotope uranium-235 for use in the manufacture of nuclear fuel for commercial power plants. The NRC completed its thorough readiness review earlier this month and concluded that the facility could begin operation under its NRC license.

LES is a subsidiary of URENCO, a company that has been using centrifuge technology in Europe for many years.

NRC inspectors conducted extensive evaluations during construction to assess whether the plant was built in accordance with its design and NRC regulations. Once construction was completed, further detailed NRC inspections looked at safety systems, training, operating procedures, security and other aspects of safe facility operation before the agency authorized operation. The NRC will continue to inspect the plant's operations for compliance with applicable regulations.

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