



NRC NEWS

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NRC SCHEDULES PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS HUMAN PERFORMANCE AT PRAIRIE ISLAND NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has scheduled a public meeting in Red Wing, Minn., on Dec. 14 to discuss the effectiveness of efforts at the Prairie Island Nuclear Plant to resolve human performance problems. The plant is located in Welch, Minn., roughly 50 miles southeast of Minneapolis, and operated by Northern State Power - Minnesota (NSPM).

The meeting will be held at 6 p.m. in the Red Wing Public Library, 225 East Avenue. The meeting is open to the public and the NRC staff will be available to answer questions after the business portion of the meeting.

Human performance concerns at Prairie Island constitute a “cross-cutting issue,” which means it “cuts across” multiple areas of plant operation. These issues tend to involve behaviors, such as the plant staff’s ability to effectively develop and follow procedures. These behaviors do not constitute violations of NRC requirements. However, they can be major contributing factors to safety-significant findings. When a cross-cutting issue is identified, the NRC expects the problem to be corrected.

The NRC first identified a cross-cutting issue in the area of human performance at Prairie Island in mid-2009. The NRC subsequently documented this issue in its annual plant assessment for 2009 and the 2010 mid-year assessment letter. In addition, the NRC held a public meeting in Dec. 2009 to gain a better understanding of how the company planned to address human performance issues.

The purpose of the Dec. 14 meeting is to have the company provide the agency and the public with an update on what has been done to address human performance; what improvements had been made; and what remains to be done to resolve these concerns.

The human performance issue will remain open until the number of findings that have human performance as a major causal factor declines and the NRC has confidence this improvement can be sustained.

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