



Y2K

New year's arrival has no effect on plant operations

AS THE YEAR 2000 came rolling through time zones across the United States, nuclear power plants reported no failures of safety systems needed to shut down reactors in the event of problems. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission reported on January 1 that all 103 operating nuclear power plants—and two gaseous diffusion facilities—successfully made it through the Y2K rollover transition.

Richard Meserve, NRC chairman, credited years of hard work by the NRC and the nuclear industry for the seamless transition to year 2000.

Ralph Beedle, senior vice president and chief nuclear officer at the Nuclear Energy Institute, echoed Meserve's words. Beedle said the nuclear industry's smooth transition into the "new millennium" was the result of a coordinated, cooperative readiness program that the industry embarked on more than two years ago. He added that some nuclear power plant operators had launched their Y2K-readiness efforts even earlier.

"The nuclear energy industry has utilized the best people and practices available, and



NEI's Beedle: "Y2K computer bug has been rendered harmless."

reinforced that with many thousands of hours of readiness and remediation activity," Beedle said. "Above and beyond fixing and retesting some 10 000 computer systems and components out of 200 000 that were examined for problems, the industry developed emergency response strategies and drilled rigorously over

the past six months. During the rollover itself, every nuclear plant in the United States had above-normal staffing in place to assure that they could continue to produce electricity as safely and reliably today as they did in the months and years before."

Beedle concluded that the "Y2K computer bug has been rendered harmless," and that nuclear power will continue to supply one-fifth of the nation's electricity needs. "As we move forward into the 21st century, with outstanding levels of safety and operating performance, America can continue to rely on nu-

As Y2K rolls in, nuclear power plants roll on.

clear power—our nation's largest source of emission-free electricity—to meet the nation's economic and environmental goals," he said.

Four of the 103 operating nuclear power plants in the United States were not producing electricity on December 31. Those plants were:

■ Duke Power's Catawba-2, in Clover, S.C., which automatically shut down at about 6:20 p.m. on December 30 without any complications. The cause of the shutdown was equipment failure. By January 5, the plant was at 15 percent power. Catawba-2 is an 1129-

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OCONEE'S CONTINUED OPERATION will have no adverse effect on its surroundings, according to a final environmental impact statement released in December by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Oconee is a three-unit pressurized water reactor plant located in Seneca, S.C. Its operator, Duke Power, filed a license-renewal application with the NRC in July 1998 asking to extend the current operating licenses for Oconee's three units. Those licenses are scheduled to expire in 2013 and 2014. If approved, the licenses would be extended for an additional 20 years. The final EIS is scheduled to be posted on the NRC's Web page at <www.nrc.gov/NRC/NUREGS/SR1437/S2/index.html>.

NEI'S NUCLEAR ADS WILL NOT BE BANNED, according to a ruling by the Federal Trade Commission. An environmental group and the Better Business Bureau had charged that the advertisements prepared by the Nuclear Energy Institute were misleading in their claims about the benefits of nuclear power. But the FTC in December agreed in part with NEI's assertion that the ads were aimed at policy-makers, thus making them political in nature and protected by the First Amendment, instead of being commercial and subjected to regulation.

WNP-2 IS SEARCHING FOR A NEW NAME, according to news reports in December coming out of the northwest. WNP-2, the 1225-MW(e) (net) General Electric boiling water reactor located in Richland, Wash., is operated by Energy Northwest, which itself changed its name last year from Washington Public Power Supply System (WPPSS—*NN*, Sept. 1999, p. 14). The reason for the reported name change, according to the company, is because WNP-2 implies that there is a WNP-1, which there is not. Energy Northwest, back when it was still WPPSS, had plans in the 1980s to build five nuclear plants. WNP-2 was the only one completed and brought into commercial operation.

THE NUCLEAR MANAGEMENT COMPANY WILL MAKE HUDSON, WIS., its headquarters location. The company was formed last year by Alliant Energy Corporation, Northern States Power Company, Wisconsin Electric Power Company, and Wisconsin Public Service Corporation to provide management and services to the member utilities' seven Midwestern nuclear power plants (*NN*, Apr. 1999, p. 12). The town of Hudson, in western Wisconsin, is close to all the utilities that the company serves, a company spokesperson said in December.

A LICENSE TRANSFER REQUEST WAS MADE in December by the ComEd Nuclear Generation Group to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The request seeks the approval to transfer the licenses of the company's 13 nuclear units from ComEd to a new generating company, which has yet to be named. The new company will be formed in

MWe (net) Westinghouse pressurized water reactor.

■ PECO Energy Company's Limerick-2, in Pottstown, Pa., which shut down at about 1:10 a.m. on December 31 due to failure of the plant's main electrical transformer. The reactor shut down without any complications and was stable on January 1. By January 5, the plant was at 90 percent power and increasing to 100 percent. Limerick-2 is a 1200-MWe (net) General Electric boiling water reactor.

■ American Electric Power's D.C. Cook-1 and -2, in Bridgman, Mich. The units have been shut down since September 1997 be-

cause of maintenance and design issues. The scheduled startup dates for the units are September 2000 for Unit 1 and April 2000 for Unit 2, according to an AEP spokesperson. Cook-1 is a 1020-MWe (net) Westinghouse PWR, and Cook-2 is a 1090-MWe (net) Westinghouse PWR.

A fifth plant, Tennessee Valley Authority's Browns Ferry-1, in Decatur, Ala., has not operated since March 1985, when it was shut down because of various NRC and TVA concerns. It is not considered one of the nation's 103 operating nuclear power plants, although an operating license for the unit still exists, ac-

cording to a TVA spokesperson. Browns Ferry-1 is a 1065-MWe (net) GE BWR.

According to NEI, all the operating plants that were not producing power on December 31 were Y2K-ready, as was required by the NRC.

Internationally, the International Atomic Energy Agency reported on January 1 that all countries operating nuclear power plants had confirmed that "no incidents with implications for safety" occurred as a result of the immediate transition to year 2000. **IN**

connection with the proposed merger of Unicom Corporation, the parent of ComEd, and PECO Energy Corporation (*NN*, Oct. 1999, p. 17). The 13 ComEd units are Braidwood-1 and -2, Byron-1 and -2, Dresden-1, -2, and -3, LaSalle County-1 and -2, Quad Cities-1 and -2, and the permanently shutdown Zion-1 and -2. All units are located in Illinois.

DOMINION GENERATION'S NORTH ANNA AND SURRY nuclear power plants set a company record for nuclear-generated electricity in 1999. The two-unit North Anna and Surry plants generated more than 28.3 million MWh, a 4 percent increase over the previous record of 27.1 million MWh achieved in 1998. The overall capacity factor of the four nuclear units in 1999 was 95.2 percent, an increase over the previous company record of 91.7 percent set in 1998.

MILLSTONE-2 ACHIEVED A SAFETY MILESTONE during the week of December 19-25 when its employees reached 6 million consecutive hours worked without a lost workday incident. The employees have worked six years, since 1993, without the loss of work due to an accident.

THE PROPOSED MERGER BETWEEN NEW ENGLAND ELECTRIC SYSTEM (NEES) and National Grid Group plc was approved by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, NEES announced on December 13. NRC approval was required because NEES subsidiary New England Power Company owns minority interests in six nuclear power plants in the United States.

EXELON CORPORATION IS THE NAME of the new company to be formed by the merger of PECO Energy Company and Unicom Corporation (*NN*, Oct. 1999, p. 17). "Exelon stands for experience and excellence," said Corbin McNeill, Jr., PECO's chairman, president, and chief executive officer, who made the announcement on December 16. Exelon is also the existing name of some of PECO's unregulated business ventures. McNeill and John Rowe, Unicom's chairman, president, and CEO, will become co-CEOs of the new company. Exelon will have the following senior officers: Michael J. Egan, chief financial officer; Paul A. Elbert, unregulated enterprises president; Pamela B. Strobel, general counsel; Oliver D. Kingsley, Jr., chief nuclear officer; Ian P. McLean, power team president; Kenneth G. Lawrence, PECO Energy distribution president; Carl J. Croskey, ComEd distribution president; and S. Gary Snodgrass, chief human resources officer. Additional members of the senior management team will be announced in the near future.

FOUR BRUCE UNITS ARE UP FOR SALE, according to news reports in December on the Ontario Power Generation nuclear power plants. Bruce-3 and -4 were removed from service in 1998, Bruce-1 in 1997, and Bruce-2 in 1995. Projected restart dates for Bruce 1-4 are unavailable, according to an Ontario Hydro spokesperson. Each of the units, in Tiverton, Ont., Canada, is a 769-MWe (net) pressurized heavy-water reactor.