

Unit 2 at PPL's Susquehanna Nuclear Plant Begins Planned Biennial Outage; Event Systematically Extends Peak Operating Condition

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Operators safely shut down the Unit 2 reactor at PPL's Susquehanna nuclear plant near Berwick, Pa., on Saturday (3/10) to begin the unit's 10th planned refueling and inspection outage since it began commercial operation in 1985.

(Photo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/19981015/PHTH025>)

During the outage, employees will replenish the reactor's uranium fuel, and will systematically inspect, test and refurbish equipment to maintain peak operating condition on Unit 2.

"These outages are a crucial part of the operating cycle at a nuclear plant, not only to refuel, but also to perform systematic preventive maintenance and make upgrades to the system," said Herbert D. Woodeshick, PPL's special assistant to the president for Susquehanna. "We take the time to identify potential problems of equipment reliability and address them long before they have a chance to become major difficulties affecting plant reliability."

About 40 percent of the unit's uranium fuel will be replaced during the outage, which will enable Unit 2 to operate continuously for 24 months before another refueling.

More than 9,000 scheduled activities for about 2,500 work items will be completed while Unit 2 is shut down. Among the specific projects to be accomplished are: replacing 300 fuel bundles; changing the equipment that regulates and measures the feed water returning to the reactor, which allows for a 1.4 percent, or 14 megawatt, increase in unit efficiency; replacing about 12 percent of the control rods used to manage reactivity; conducting 2,500 visual inspections of piping and core components; overhauling two large motors; inspecting three main steam isolation valves; and making improvements related to erosion/corrosion of piping.

Last spring, Unit 1 at Susquehanna underwent a similar refueling and inspection outage; it was the unit's 11th such outage since it began commercial operation in 1983. PPL Susquehanna, LLC schedules these outages for the spring because the demand for electricity is lower then, as compared with other times of the year.

Effective outages help ensure that Susquehanna safely generates the maximum amount of electricity. "The outage is a controlled and well-planned series of events supported by hundreds of dedicated and motivated employees and outside contractors," Woodeshick said. "The four key ingredients of every job performed during this outage are safety, communication, quality and productivity."

Unit 2 has run for 197 consecutive days since an outage last August to make repairs to an instrument line in the primary containment area. Since its last refueling and inspection outage two years ago, Unit 2 has generated about 17.1 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity. A kilowatt-hour is enough electricity to power a 100-watt light bulb for 10 hours. An average PPL residential customer uses about 10,000 kilowatt-hours a year.

Unit 2's operating capacity factor since the last refueling and inspection outage was about 94 percent. Operating capacity factor, a measure of reliability, compares a unit's output to the amount of electricity it could generate if it ran continuously at full power.

The Susquehanna plant, located in Luzerne County about five miles north of Berwick, is owned jointly by PPL Susquehanna, LLC and Allegheny Electric Cooperative Inc. and is operated by PPL Susquehanna.

PPL Susquehanna is one of PPL Corp.'s generating facilities. Allentown, Pa.-based PPL Corp. (NYSE: PPL)

generates electricity at power plants in Pennsylvania, Maine and Montana; markets wholesale or retail energy in 42 U.S. states and Canada; and delivers electricity to nearly 6 million customers in Pennsylvania, in the United Kingdom and in Latin America.

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