

PPL's Susquehanna Nuclear Plant Begins Planned Outage to Systematically Extend Peak Operating Condition on Unit 1 Reactor

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BERWICK, Pa.

Operators safely shut down the Unit 1 reactor at PPL's Susquehanna nuclear plant near Berwick, Pa., on Saturday (3/2) to begin the unit's 12th planned refueling and inspection outage since it began commercial operation in 1983.

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

During the outage, workers will replenish about 40 percent of the unit's uranium fuel, which will enable Unit 1 to operate continuously for 24 months before another refueling. Crews also will perform systematic preventive maintenance and make upgrades to the system for peak operation.

"These biennial planned outages are a crucial part of the operating cycle at Susquehanna," said Herb D. Woodeshick, special assistant to the president for Susquehanna. "They help ensure that Susquehanna safely generates the maximum amount of electricity."

Besides the replacement of fuel bundles, more than 2,300 work items are scheduled to be completed while Unit 1 is shut down.

"The work done during a planned outage is a high form of systematic preventive maintenance," Woodeshick said. "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."

Some of the larger projects to be completed include replacing three large feedwater heaters, rewinding the wire coils of the main generator, and replacing the equipment used to regulate and measure reactor feedwater flow. "These are examples of how we aggressively look for opportunities to invest in equipment upgrades during these outages to improve our plant's performance," Woodeshick said.

The Unit 1 reactor has run continuously since it returned to service following its previous refueling outage in April 2000. Since then, the reactor has generated about 16 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity, and its operating capacity factor was about 96 percent.

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. 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.

Last spring, Unit 2 at Susquehanna underwent a similar refueling and inspection outage; it was the unit's 10th such outage since it began commercial operation in 1985. PPL Susquehanna schedules these outages for the spring because the demand for electricity is lower then, as compared with other times of the year.

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 Corporation's major generating facilities. Headquartered in Allentown, Pa., PPL Corporation (NYSE: PPL) controls or owns more than 10,000 megawatts of generating capacity in the United States, markets energy in select U.S. states and Canada, and delivers electricity to nearly 6 million customers in Pennsylvania, the United Kingdom and Latin America.

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