PPL's Susquehanna Nuclear Power Plant Begins Repair Process on Pipe

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Technicians at PPL's Susquehanna nuclear power plant have begun repairs to a pipe in the Unit 1 water recirculation system.

The unit has been shut down since February 28 for a planned refueling and inspection outage. Repairs are expected to have minimal impact on the duration of the outage, which is scheduled to be completed by the middle of April.

"We discovered a defect during a systematic, in-service inspection of the reactor's water recirculation system," said Herbert D. Woodeshick, special assistant to the president for PPL Susquehanna. "We believe any impact to the outage schedule will only be a matter of a few days."

The water recirculation system is a two-loop system that takes water out of the reactor and then puts it back in at a higher pressure. The system moves water through the reactor fuel core and is used to control the reactor's power level.

Plant personnel routinely inspect piping for signs of corrosion using ultrasonic testing equipment as part of an approved reactor vessel inspection program. To repair the defect, crews will use a pre-designed and pre-qualified industry technique called a weld overlay, which has been used at several other U.S. nuclear power plants.

"We inspect critical components to identify and correct issues," Woodeshick said. "This defect and its repair are within the existing industry experience and regulatory requirements."

In accordance with the vessel inspection program, this pipe was previously inspected in 1998. This defect has not been found in Unit 2's water recirculation system, which undergoes similar equipment inspections during its refueling outages, Woodeshick said. Unit 2 completed a refueling outage last spring.

Susquehanna conducts refueling and inspection outages for each of the plant's reactors every two years on alternating schedules to prepare the units for safe and reliable operation. This is the 13th such outage for Unit 1 since it began operation in 1983.

During this outage, work crews will replace and upgrade all four steam turbines, which will add 50 megawatts of generation capacity. The main transformers, which increase the voltage for transmission to customers, are being replaced to handle the increased electrical load.

Workers also will replace 280 fuel assemblies - about 40 percent of its uranium fuel - and perform more than 2,600 tasks to provide preventive maintenance and improve performance.

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

PPL Susquehanna LLC is a member of the PPL Corporation (NYSE: PPL) family of companies. Headquartered in Allentown, Pa., PPL Corporation controls about 11,500 megawatts of generating capacity in the United States, sells energy in key U.S. markets and delivers electricity to nearly 5 million customers in Pennsylvania, the United Kingdom and Latin America. More information is available at www.pplweb.com.

SOURCE: PPL Corporation

CONTACT: Herbert D. Woodeshick, PPL Corporation, +1-570-759-2285, Fax: +1-610-774-5281

Web site: http://www.pplweb.com/