

PPL Susquehanna Undertakes Turbine Improvement Project

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Workers at PPL's Susquehanna nuclear power plant began the largest improvement project in the facility's history when Unit 2 was shut down early this morning for its planned refueling and inspection outage.

During the outage, plant crews will replace all four of the unit's steam turbines, which spin a generator to produce electricity at the plant.

"This long-term investment will provide an extra 50 megawatts of generation capacity, improving our ability to provide reliable and cost-efficient power to residents and businesses in northeastern Pennsylvania," said Herbert D. Woodeshick, special assistant to the president for Susquehanna.

Crews will remove the unit's three low-pressure turbines and one high-pressure turbine and install new, more efficient ones. More than 4 million pounds of material -- equal to 333 full-grown male African elephants -- will be moved. Each low-pressure turbine is about 14 feet in diameter, 34 feet long and weighs about 140 tons. The high-pressure turbine is somewhat smaller and lighter.

Unit 1's turbines will undergo a similar retrofit next year.

"Preparation for this project began almost two years ago. We carefully studied similar projects at other nuclear plants and incorporated lessons learned to ensure that we maintain a safe work environment during this massive undertaking," Woodeshick said.

For example, to prepare for the safe delivery of the turbines, PPL Susquehanna had parts of the North Shore Railroad and plant loading areas upgraded to support the wide and heavy loads.

Also during this outage, workers will replenish 284 fuel bundles -- about 40 percent of the unit's uranium fuel -- which will enable Unit 2 to operate for 24 months before another refueling. Additionally, crews will perform systematic preventive maintenance and make additional upgrades to the system for peak operation.

"We take time to identify potential equipment reliability issues and address them long before they have a chance to affect plant safety and reliability," Woodeshick said. Crews will perform more than 2,100 separate tasks during the outage.

Susquehanna schedules these planned biennial outages for the spring because the demand for electricity is lower then, as compared with other times of the year. This is Unit 2's 11th such outage since it began operation in 1985; last spring, Unit 1 underwent its 12th refueling outage since it began commercial operation in 1983.

Since its last refueling, Unit 2 operated at a capacity factor of 95 percent. Capacity factor is a measure of electricity produced versus what would have been produced if the unit had operated at full power continuously. Over the past two years, Unit 2 has generated 17.6 billion kilowatt-hours, enough electricity to supply the annual needs of about 1.8 million residential customers in northeastern Pennsylvania.

The Susquehanna plant, located in Luzerne County 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 is one of PPL Corporation's generating facilities. Headquartered in Allentown, Pa., PPL Corporation (NYSE: PPL) controls about 11,500 megawatts of generating capacity in the United States, sells energy in key U.S. markets and delivers electricity to customers in Pennsylvania, the United Kingdom and Latin America.

SOURCE: PPL Corporation

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