

PPL's Susquehanna Unit 2 Nuclear Reactor Completes Planned Outage

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The Unit 2 reactor at PPL's Susquehanna nuclear power plant in Luzerne County, Pa. returned to service this morning (4/21), completing the plant's most successful refueling and inspection outage.

"Besides replenishing the reactor's fuel and performing systematic preventive maintenance, crews made a number of significant upgrades that will help ensure that Susquehanna safely generates the maximum amount of electricity," said Herbert D. Woodeshick, special assistant to the president for Susquehanna.

"The excellent performance of our work teams, combined with the long-term benefits that will result from the work, clearly make this the most successful outage in the 20-year history of Susquehanna," he said.

Undertaking the largest improvement project in the facility's history, crews moved more than 4 million pounds of material to replace all four of the unit's steam turbines, which spin the generator to produce electricity. This investment provides an additional 50 megawatts of generation capacity, increasing Unit 2's output to 1,150 megawatts, Woodeshick said.

This was the 11th refueling outage for Unit 2. Unit 1's turbines will undergo a similar improvement next year.

In an industry first, teams successfully installed labyrinth seals on all 20 of the unit's jet pumps, which are used to drive water from the recirculation system back through the reactor core. "This modification of the pumps eliminates the excessive wear caused by vibration, increases the reactor's fuel efficiency and will be a model for other operational boiling water reactor plants across the country," he said.

Of the more than 2,100 work tasks completed during the 44-day outage, workers also replaced 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.

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 generated 17.6 billion kilowatt-hours, enough electricity to supply the annual needs of about 1.8 million residential customers in northeastern Pennsylvania.

The 2,250-megawatt Susquehanna plant has two boiling water reactors; Unit 1 began commercial operation in 1983, and Unit 2 came on line in 1985. Located about seven miles north of Berwick, the plant 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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