

Apr. 12–Apr. 18, 2013

A report to members of the
Nuclear Energy Institute

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Overview

In This Issue

NEI Proposes Prioritization Process for NRC Actions	1
EPA Proposes New Approach to Recovery from Nuclear Incidents	2
Industry Finds DOE 2014 Budget Largely Disappointing	3
U.S. Nuclear Plants Achieved Outstanding Performance in 2012	6
DOE to Fund R&D Project on Used Fuel Extended Storage	7
House Committee Considers Used Fuel Storage Options	7
NEI Shares Views on Tax Issues with Ways and Means Committee	9

NEI Proposes Prioritization Process for NRC Actions

April 18, 2013—The nuclear industry is proposing to develop a risk-informed process to prioritize and schedule regulatory and industry actions according to their safety significance, NEI said this week.

The [April 16 letter](#) to the NRC includes an initial list of regulatory actions that the industry believes should be given top priority, along with others it says should be modified, withdrawn, suspended or deferred.

NEI's letter said the industry's efforts to address the cumulative impact of regulation are driven by the need to ensure that attention and resources are focused on the safe operation of nuclear energy facilities.

"Neither the industry nor the NRC has infinite resources to dedicate to the regulatory system for nuclear energy facilities," NEI said.

The letter added, "Maintaining safe, reliable operations; implementing the Fukushima lessons-learned; and implementing new or revised regulatory requirements for reactor safety and security all require NRC and industry attention and resources. To effectively fulfill our respective responsibilities, these activities should be prioritized and scheduled in an integrated manner."

An integrated scheduling process, the letter said, would allow individual nuclear energy facility sites to engage the NRC with a three- to five-year implementation plan that incorporates major regulatory actions with plant-initiated improvements.

The letter also makes clear the industry's rationale for prioritizing regulatory actions.

"Policymakers, industry and the NRC agree with the principle that resources should be focused on matters that have safety significance as opposed to matters that have minimal safety significance," the letter said. "The result should be the higher the safety significance, the higher the scheduling priority."

The letter says the efficiency of regulatory processes could be improved to save time and resources.

"In the industry's reviews, we are identifying common themes: vague problem definitions, absence of clearly defined success criteria, and prolonged regulatory interactions over inspection findings of low safety significance," the letter said. These issues, NEI added, "can result in scope expansions, meandering projects schedules, inefficient use of resources, and persistently open regulatory issues."

NEI cites [a recent letter](#) to the agency that reiterates industry concerns related to fuel-cycle facilities (see [Nuclear Energy Overview, April 3](#)).



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Used Fuel Management Conference

Renaissance Vinoy
St. Petersburg, FL
May 7-9, 2013

Among the topics to be discussed in this conference are: dry cask storage regulatory improvements and reduction of cumulative burden; emerging and on-going used fuel storage and transportation technical and regulatory issues; U.S. used fuel management policy; update of Fukushima used fuel activities; interim storage and transportation of used fuel; waste confidence and extended storage and transportation; ISFSI security and updates of cask loading experience.

For more information and to register to attend, go to: <http://www.nei.org/newsandevents/conferencesandmeetings/ufmc>.

“The number of [fuel-cycle facility] regulatory actions has increased significantly during the past five years,” the earlier letter said, referring to the proposed overhaul of the NRC’s fuel-cycle oversight process and new requirements in several areas. “In some cases, the basis for these new requirements has been difficult to understand, especially in view of the minimal number of safety or security issues that have been identified and the low public safety risk from these facilities.”

The industry plans to discuss its proposals in NRC meetings scheduled for [April 24](#) and [May 8](#).

For more information on the cumulative impact of regulation, see NEI’s [policy brief](#).
<< Thaddeus Swanek, tjs@nei.org

EPA Proposes New Approach to Recovery From Nuclear Incidents

April 18, 2013—Proposed guidance from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency would for the first time help federal, state and local emergency response officials make radiation protection decisions on allowing people to re-enter areas that have been contaminated after a radiation-related incident.

The proposed revision to EPA’s “Protective Action Guides and Planning Guidance for Radiological Incidents” ([2013 PAG Manual](#)) adds interagency guidance developed in 2008 to protect and recover from so-called “dirty bombs” and crude nuclear weapons to previous guidance on nuclear power reactor accidents.

Emergency management officials use PAGs to make decisions on protecting the public from radiation exposure during an emergency. The PAGs are not legally binding but provide specific protective action recommendations that may be taken in response to varying radiation doses, including short-term preventive evacuation, shelter-in-place, temporary relocation, and food and water restrictions.

The new guidance incorporates lessons learned from the Fukushima accident and will give emergency responders, policymakers and members of the public decision-making flexibility to balance radiation health risks with other factors to ensure that protective actions “result in more benefit than harm,” according to the [Federal Register notice](#) announcing the availability of the revised document for interim use and comment.

As outlined by the World Health Organization in its [2013 health risk assessment](#) on the situation in Japan, health impacts have been occurring from psychological and social stresses among people who were forced to relocate from their communities near the Fukushima plant.

The draft updates to EPA’s 1992 PAG Manual were developed with the participation of the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the NRC, DOE and the Department of Health and Human Services, among other agencies.

The Federal Register notice says the draft manual ensures the most current science is available for calculating dose assessments, radiation health effects and food protection standards. The manual also does not overturn or supersede drinking water or “Superfund” site decontamination standards.



**Grand Hyatt Washington
Washington DC
May 13-15, 2013**

Nuclear Energy Assembly is the nuclear energy industry's annual conference and nuclear supplier expo and is attended widely by leaders from all segments of the industry.

For more information and to register to attend, go to: <http://www.nei.org/newsandevents/conferencesandmeetings/nea>.

“The nuclear energy industry already has detailed and well-tested plans for the immediate response to nuclear emergencies,” said Ralph Andersen, NEI’s senior director for radiation safety and environmental protection. “This proposed guidance for recovering from such an emergency expands and enhances those plans. It does not supersede existing radiation safety standards for allowable exposure or cleanup.”

Andersen added, “EPA’s proposal is a well-considered and sound approach to recovery from radiological incidents in the medium to long term. The non-prescriptive approach empowers members of the public and health protection experts to participate in decision-making on radiation protection actions by providing relevant sources of information and laying out response options.”

EPA is [soliciting public comment](#) on the revised manual until July 15. Andersen said an NEI task force will carefully review the document and formulate detailed comments on behalf of the industry. << Chris Charles, cic@nei.org

Industry Finds DOE 2014 Budget Largely Disappointing

April 16, 2013—The president’s 2014 budget proposal for the Energy Department makes deep cuts to many line items relevant to its nuclear energy office, seeks to re-impose a multi-billion dollar tax for the cleanup of three DOE uranium enrichment facilities, and throws the nonproliferation commitments made by the United States into doubt.

While the overall [DOE budget](#) of \$28.4 billion represents an 8 percent increase from the 2013 enacted level, the \$735 million provided for nuclear energy programs is a 5 percent reduction from 2013 levels.

Most line items related to nuclear energy, science and technology saw cuts from the previous year, some of them dramatic.

The spending plan heavily cuts DOE’s funding for technology innovation programs, from the present \$389 million to \$300 million next year. Reactor concepts research and development would be trimmed from \$116 million to \$73 million, nuclear energy enabling technologies from \$75 million to \$62 million, and fuel cycle research and development from \$187 million to \$165 million.

The budget also would reinstate the decontamination and decommissioning fund tax, which was established to clean up the government’s uranium enrichment facilities in Kentucky, Ohio and Tennessee. The nuclear energy industry already has met its \$2.6 billion obligation to the fund as required by law. The industry strongly opposed earlier attempts to reassert the tax and Congress has removed it from the budget each time it has been proposed.

The budget request delivered some of its harshest cuts for programs to train the next generation of nuclear industry workers and improve nuclear energy education. It would zero out nuclear energy university programs, resulting in the loss of approximately \$5 million in scholarships and fellowships for nuclear engineering, science and technology students at DOE and a related \$15 million program at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

FLEX/EP Integration Workshop

**Hyatt Regency Baltimore
Baltimore, MD
June 11, 2013**

During this workshop the SAFER Team will present the results of the pilot plants' playbook development and tabletop drills. Additionally the SAFER Team will present the generic response plan templates to the industry for final comments prior to issuance.

Utility representatives responsible for response plan development and staging area selection should attend.

For more information and to register to attend, go to: <http://www.nei.org/newsandevents/conferencesandmeetings/flex>.

Other reductions in the budget have alarmed the industry, especially the \$183 million cut in DOE's fissile materials disposition program, meant for the mixed oxide fuel (MOX) plant under construction in South Carolina. The facility is about 60 percent complete.

The MOX facility implements a U.S.-Russia agreement to convert 34 metric tons of surplus weapons-grade plutonium to MOX fuel for use in domestic nuclear energy facilities.

Alex Flint, NEI's senior vice president for governmental affairs, harshly criticized the reduction, saying it throws into question the assumption made by the project's partners, including the Russian Federation, that the U.S. government is a credible partner capable of fulfilling its arms control and nonproliferation commitments.

"To reduce funding for completing the project at this time will validate again those critics of the government, and DOE in particular, who claim it simply cannot complete complex projects, particularly those concerning nuclear materials," Flint said.

Flint said the industry "will immediately begin to work with Congress to propose budget levels and programs that will better meet our energy and nonproliferation priorities."

One bright note in the budget is a slight increase in the requested amount to support certification and licensing assistance for small reactor designs, from \$67 million in the year 2013 to \$70 million in 2014, but even at that funding level, the budget falls short of the annual amount required to complete the six-year, \$452 million program.

USED FUEL MANAGEMENT

DOE's budget request would provide \$24 million from the federal Nuclear Waste Fund to support generic used nuclear fuel management initiatives in the recommendations made by the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future.

Flint said NEI is disappointed that the executive branch has not proposed legislation to implement the recommendations, but he lauded the administration for providing access to the annual collections and balance of the Nuclear Waste Fund to finance the construction and operation of a pilot consolidated storage facility and to move forward on studying long-term permanent geologic disposal options.

"I am pleased that the administration will support mandatory appropriations in addition to the discretionary funding to begin in 2017 to fund the balance of a 10-year, approximately \$5.6 billion program," Flint said.

LOAN GUARANTEES

Funding authority for the loan guarantee program remains constant at \$18.5 billion. In 2010, DOE issued the first nuclear energy-specific conditional loan guarantee of \$8.3 billion to Southern Co. and its partners to help finance the construction of two reactors at its Plant Vogtle site in Georgia. The guarantee remains unused while Southern Co. and DOE negotiate the loan origination fee.

Loan guarantees are not actual appropriations and, therefore, do not represent an outlay of taxpayer dollars when the projects they support are successfully completed. For nuclear power projects, recipients must pay a fee for the guarantee. The guaran-



**Grand Hyatt Washington
Washington, DC
May 12-14, 2013**

The 2013 North American Young Generation in Nuclear annual workshop will be held May 12-14, just prior to the Nuclear Energy Assembly in Washington, D.C. The theme for this year's workshop is "Securing the Future of Nuclear: Safety, Technology and Leadership."

This year there will be two special interactive activities—a special team-building activity on Monday afternoon followed by an opportunity to conduct Capitol Hill visits on Tuesday.

More than 400 NAYGN members are expected to attend this year. Young professionals and students in all areas of nuclear science and technology are encouraged to attend.

For more information and to register to attend, go to: <http://www.nei.org/newsandevents/conferencesandmeetings/naygn>.

tees aim to boost investor confidence and allow worthy projects to obtain financing on more reasonable terms that ultimately will lower the cost of electricity generated by the projects.

The accompanying chart shows DOE's budget numbers in categories relevant to the nuclear energy industry. It will appear in Nuclear Energy Overview periodically, revised to follow the federal appropriations process through the year.

<< Mark Flanagan, mpf@nei.org

Nuclear Energy Funding (in millions of dollars)

	2013 <i>Continuing Resolution</i>	2014 <i>Budget Request</i>
Nuclear Energy, Science And Technology	770	735
Program Direction	91.5	87.5
SMR Licensing Program	67.4	70
Reactor Concepts R&D	115.5	72.5 ^a
Radiological Facilities Management	70	5
University Programs	5	0
Nuclear Energy Enabling Technologies	75.1	62.3 ^b
Fuel Cycle R&D	187.4	165.1
Int'l Nuclear Energy Cooperation	3	2.5
Fissile Materials Disposition	708	503
Nuclear Waste Disposal	18	24
Nuclear Waste Fund	18	24
Defense Nuclear Waste Disposal Funds	0	0
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission +IG	1,053.2	1,060
Nuclear Waste Fund	0	0

(a) Includes \$21.5 million for LWR sustainability, \$20 million for NGNP and \$20 million for small reactors/advanced concepts R&D

(b) Includes \$24.3 million for modeling and simulation hub; \$14.5 million for National Scientific User Facility; \$9.5 million for NEAMS



Westin Westminster
Westminster, CO
June 24-27, 2013

This workshop is a forum to exchange experiences and issues related to the radioactive effluent technical specifications (RETS) and radiological environmental monitoring programs (REMP) at commercial nuclear power plants.

The open format allows utility personnel to openly discuss effluent and environmental monitoring issues among themselves and with personnel from state and federal regulatory agencies.

For more information and to register to attend, go to: <http://www.nei.org/newsandevents/conferencesandmeetings/rets>.

WANO: Nuclear Energy Facilities Achieved Outstanding Safety Performance in 2012

April 15, 2013—U.S. nuclear energy facilities once again operated at high levels of safety and efficiency in 2012, according to newly released performance metrics compiled by the [World Association of Nuclear Operators](#) (WANO) and the [Institute of Nuclear Power Operations](#) (INPO). In several key areas, U.S. commercial facilities either matched or improved upon outstanding levels of performance from previous years.

“Last year was one of the nuclear industry’s most demanding, as it began implementing its FLEX response strategy encompassing additional layers of safety from lessons learned from the Fukushima accident, and weathering the strongest Atlantic tropical storm on record,” said Anthony Pietrangelo, NEI’s senior vice president and chief nuclear officer. “The 2012 safety and performance indicators are a testimony to the resiliency of our plants and the dedication of the industry’s men and women to safe and efficient operations no matter the challenges.”

The more than 100 nuclear reactors in 31 states operated at near-record levels of efficiency, even though four were out of service for most or all of last year. In 2012, U.S. facilities operated at a median capability factor of 91.2 percent, according to the WANO data. This marked the 13th straight year that a median capability factor of 91 percent or higher has been achieved.

Capability factor measures the amount of time a facility is on-line and producing electricity. The industry’s record capability factor of 92 percent was set in 2005.

Other notable results from 2012 include:

- The 62 unplanned automatic or manual shutdowns matched the record low set in 2011.
- The industrial accident rate of 0.05 accidents per 200,000 worker-hours is well below the 2015 goal of 0.1. (Statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics for 2011 demonstrate that it is safer to work at a nuclear power plant than in the manufacturing, leisure and hospitality, or financial sectors.)
- The median value of 1.2 percent forced loss matched an historic best set in 2006. Forced loss rate measures a plant’s outage time and power reductions that result from unplanned equipment failures, human error and other limiting conditions.

“The 2012 performance indicators verify that the nuclear energy industry has in place a strong safety culture that is rooted in continuous learning, benchmarking, information sharing on operational issues, and constant training,” said Pietrangelo.

Additional evidence of nuclear plants’ reliability came during Hurricane Sandy. Of the 34 reactors from South Carolina to Vermont in Hurricane Sandy’s path, 24 continued to operate safely and generate electricity throughout the event. Of the remaining 10 reactors, seven already were shut down for refueling or inspection, and three in New Jersey and New York safely shut down, as designed, because of storm conditions or grid disturbances.



Emergency Preparedness Training & Forum

Hyatt Regency Baltimore
Baltimore, MD
June 9-14, 2013

The 2013 EP Forum will facilitate open exchange on issues of importance to the EP community: regulatory response to the Fukushima Daiichi event, rule change implementation experience and improving EP programs during this period of transition.

The forum will be preceded by the EP training course, affording participants the opportunity to better prepare for the forum and to integrate professionals new to the EP community with experienced practitioners.

Attendance is limited to NEI members. For more information and to register to attend, go to:
<http://www.nei.org/newsandevents/conferencesandmeetings/>

WANO, headquartered in the United Kingdom, compiles worldwide nuclear energy industry performance data annually. Data for the U.S. industry is analyzed by the Atlanta-based INPO, which helps set benchmarks of excellence against which safety and plant operation are measured.

A full set of [charts of the 2012 WANO performance indicators](#) for U.S. nuclear power plants is available on NEI's website. << Thaddeus Swanek, tjs@nei.org

Progress on Used Fuel Management: DOE to Fund R&D Project on Extended Storage

April 17, 2013—The Department of Energy is investing in a new research project to design and demonstrate dry storage cask technology for high-burnup used nuclear fuel from commercial nuclear energy facilities.

Improvements in fuel technologies have allowed facility operators to achieve higher burnup levels, thereby extracting more energy from the fuel. The long-term behavior of these fuels once they have been removed from reactors is of interest to DOE, which has a legal and contractual obligation to manage their storage and ultimate disposal.

DOE's [announcement](#) said the research and development project will be conducted by the Electric Power Research Institute. The department will invest \$15.8 million toward project costs over five years, with private industry contributing 20 percent.

DOE said the project is part of its efforts to support its [strategy](#) for the safe storage and management of used nuclear fuel. The strategy, published in January, represents the department's plan to implement the [recommendations](#) of the blue ribbon commission that was tasked by the Obama administration to recommend ways to manage the nation's used fuel after it canceled the Yucca Mountain repository program.

DOE's fiscal 2014 budget, presented last week, requested \$60 million for nuclear waste-related research that aligns with the blue ribbon commission's recommendations and DOE's used fuel strategy (see [related story](#) in this week's Nuclear Energy Overview). DOE said its request includes funding to "lay the groundwork" for an integrated waste management system and for research and development on used fuel storage, transportation and materials issues.

Rodney McCullum, NEI's director for used fuel programs, said, "This project will provide valuable data to support the renewal of operating licenses for dry storage systems for extended time periods. It is an important first step toward DOE's moving forward on its responsibilities to manage and dispose of the nation's commercial used nuclear fuel." << Chris Charles, cic@nei.org

House Committee Considers Used Fuel Storage Options

April 15, 2013—Members of Congress last week heard from used nuclear fuel management experts on how to move forward with [DOE's proposed strategy](#) for an interim fuel storage program, while expressing their views on the shuttered Yucca Mountain repository program.

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www.facebook.com/NuclearEnergyInstitute.

“The political process has trumped the [Yucca Mountain] licensing process,” said Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-N.J.), chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development that held the April 11 [hearing](#). “Let’s at least keep the licensing process alive. ... I do not regard this as a dead issue.”

The Obama administration withdrew the Energy Department’s license application for the Yucca Mountain repository shortly after the president took office. The administration eventually dropped funding for continued work on the program. Work on the license application at the NRC has been halted since 2010 due to funding cuts.

A senior NRC official told the panel that there were no technical issues he knew of that would disqualify the Yucca Mountain site.

“These [Yucca Mountain review] documents do not describe any significant technical concerns with respect to the safety of the proposed site,” said Michael Weber, the NRC’s deputy executive director of operations. However, he added, during the adjudication hearing process third parties are given the opportunity to challenge DOE’s application and the NRC staff’s evaluation. “That process could reveal additional concerns,” Weber said.

Peter Lyons, DOE assistant secretary for nuclear energy, added that his agency continues to engage in repository-related research and other activities but that these activities were no longer “site-specific.”

“I’m doing nothing that could be interpreted as [Yucca Mountain-]specific,” Lyons said. “I believe the generic activities [we are conducting] are well within the Nuclear Waste Policy Act.”

Lyons said DOE is studying used fuel transportation issues and alternate strategies such as borehole disposal.

Rep. Michael Simpson (R-Idaho) said that progress on Yucca Mountain could be difficult while President Obama remains in office and that it is time to move on.

“I’m of the opinion that we have to get past this debate,” Simpson said. “For the next four years, Yucca Mountain is not going to be a possibility. That’s just the reality. ... But at some point, we’re going to have to get a geologic repository.”

Discussing development of an interim site, Simpson asked Lyons to define the term “interim” and asked how he would convince a host community that the site would not become a permanent repository.

“The linkage [of an interim site to a repository] issue is a very critical, sticky issue,” Lyons responded. “The [DOE] used fuel strategy did not specify what the linkage should be. I think one can imagine a number of softened forms of linkage ... that would provide some measure of assurance to a host site that a consolidated storage facility would not become permanent.”

Rodney Ewing, chairman of the [Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board](#), said the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) repository in New Mexico could become a model for finding a repository site using the consent-based approach put forward by the [Blue Ribbon Commission on America’s Nuclear Future](#). Ewing said the ingredients for the successful development of WIPP included independent scientific review in a public

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forum, continuous technical review by the state of New Mexico, and articulate spokespersons.

“It took a long time [to site and open WIPP],” said Ewing. “But over time with external oversight and constant discussion, the state fell into line.”

Susan Eisenhower, former member of the BRC, said that the status quo on used fuel storage is not desirable and that moving forward with a consolidated interim storage program will increase public confidence in nuclear energy.

“People are fearful of the unknown. They are going to feel a lot better when we have some kind of consolidated storage on a temporary basis,” Eisenhower said.

Witnesses’ written testimony and an audio recording of the hearing can be found on the [House Appropriations Committee website](#). << Thaddeus Swanek, tjs@nei.org

NEI Shares Views on Nuclear-Related Tax Issues with Ways and Means Committee

April 18, 2013—As Congress considers reforms to the federal tax code, NEI this week provided the [House Ways and Means Committee](#) with the industry’s position on a number of tax issues.

The [statement](#) urges the committee to:

- hold tax rates steady on earnings in nuclear decommissioning trust funds
- retain the nuclear production tax credit
- reject a new tax for the decontamination and decommissioning fund.

Funds collected from consumers as part of their electric bills are deposited in a trust fund for decommissioning nuclear energy facilities at the end of their operating licenses. The Energy Policy Act of 1992 set the tax rate on earnings in the trust funds at 20 percent, considered to be representative of the average tax rate paid by electricity consumers. Some in Congress have suggested increasing the rate to the general corporate rate (nominally up to 35 percent). NEI said this is misguided and would hurt consumers.

“Increasing the taxes paid by nuclear decommissioning trust funds would be unwise and unfair, and would basically represent a new tax on consumers of electricity,” NEI’s statement said. “The rationale for the 20 percent tax rate on earnings in nuclear decommissioning trust funds is as sound today as it was in 1992.”

NEI also is urging the retention of the production tax credit of 1.8 cents per kilowatt-hour of electricity produced by new nuclear energy facilities, as provided for by the Energy Policy Act of 2005. The credit is available only for the first 6,000 megawatts of new nuclear generating capacity to come on line by 2020.

Based on these restrictions, only two projects are likely to qualify for the credit—the Vogtle 3 and 4 reactors being built by Georgia Power Co. and the Summer 2 and 3 reactors being built by South Carolina Electric & Gas.

“Georgia Power Co. and South Carolina Electric & Gas based their decisions to build these projects partly on the availability of the production tax credit,” NEI’s statement

said. “The public service commissions in Georgia and South Carolina based their approval of ... these two projects partly on the existence of the federal production tax credit. Congress should not do anything in tax reform that limits availability of the credit for new nuclear power projects.”

On the 1992 fund that was set up to finance the cleanup of three 1950s-era DOE-owned uranium enrichment facilities, NEI pointed out that utilities have already paid twice into the fund.

“Despite this, electric utilities are being asked to pay a third time for the same program. This is unacceptable and represents a new ‘hidden’ tax on consumers of electricity,” NEI said. << Thaddeus Swanek, tjs@nei.org

Milestones

Prairie Island Steam Generators Arrive



Replacement steam generators for unit 2 of Xcel Energy’s Prairie Island nuclear energy facility pass through a lock near Red Wing, Minn. The plant is in the background. For a video clip, see [here](#). (Photo credit: Xcel Energy)

Steam Generators Installed at Chinese Reactors

Steam generator installation is under way at two nuclear reactors under construction in China.

The first of three steam generators at Ningde 3 was installed earlier this month, according to China Nuclear Engineering and Construction Corp. The reactor is one of four CPR-1000s being built at the site in Fujian province. All four reactors are expected to come on line by the end of 2015.

NEI's Plant Site Emergency Contacts Database

NEI's Nuclear Plant Site Emergency Contacts database facilitates routine communications among industry professionals and effects a ready response to plant events or other developments.

It contains basic data on U.S. nuclear energy facilities, joint information centers, emergency planning zone populations and emergency plan contacts for all sites, as well as media and public information contacts.

To submit updates for a plant site or for more information, contact NEI's Jennifer Maloney at jxm@nei.org.

Steam generator installation is also in progress at the Fangjiashan site, where two CPR-1000s are under construction. A CPR-1000 contains three steam generators, each of which weighs about 85 metric tons.

New Rosatom Unit to Focus on Back End of Fuel Cycle

Russia's state nuclear corporation will create a separate unit to manage business related to the back end of the fuel cycle.

In organizing the unit, Rosatom has involved several subsidiaries—including the Federal Center for Nuclear and Radiation Safety, Radioactive Waste Management Co., the Khlopin Radium Institute, the Mining and Chemical Combine, and Radon, its low- and intermediate-level waste management company. The subsidiaries' heads met this week to discuss the strategic, technical and financial goals of the new unit. << Chris Charles, cic@nei.org and Andrea Korte, aek@nei.org

Contracts

B&W Signs Agreement With DOE for SMR Funding

Babcock & Wilcox mPower Inc. has signed a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Energy that will allow the company to access \$79 million in federal funding to support commercial development of its mPower small reactor by 2022.

Under the Small Modular Reactor Licensing Technical Support Program, DOE selected the mPower America team for the competitively bid funding opportunity. The mPower America team—which includes Babcock & Wilcox, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and Generation mPower, made up of B&W mPower and Bechtel—aims to build up to four mPower units at the Clinch River site in Tennessee.

DOE has said that about \$150 million will be available over the next five years, but the agreement allows for \$226 million or more. Babcock & Wilcox mPower said it will use any further funding to support licensing and engineering.

The next steps for the project include geological characterization studies, which will begin at Clinch River in the next six weeks. The team will also develop a preliminary safety analysis report, a design certification application and a construction permit application.

AREVA Alliance to Manage FLEX Regional Response Centers

AREVA and the Pooled Equipment Inventory Co. have signed contracts to operate two regional response centers as part of the U.S. nuclear industry's diverse and flexible coping strategy (FLEX) developed in the wake of the events at Fukushima Daiichi.

The Strategic Alliance for FLEX Emergency Response, or SAFER, brings the two companies together to manage the centers in Memphis and Phoenix. Each site will house a full set of emergency response equipment, including safety and emergency response equipment, electrical generators and pumps. All equipment will be available for dispatch to any site in the United States within 24 hours of an extreme event.

<< Chris Charles, cic@nei.org and Andrea Korte, aek@nei.org