

# NRC to evaluate Vermont Yankee's safety performance

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BRATTLEBORO — The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission will hold a public meeting to evaluate the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant's performance for the final time before the plant shuts down at year's end.

The annual review, set for Wednesday, May 28, will begin with a brief presentation on the plant's decommissioning process before a formal question-and-answer session on the plant's safety performance, commission officials said in a statement this week.

Commission officials said in the statement they have determined that Vermont Yankee operated safely in 2013.

"At the conclusion of last year, as assessed by the reactor oversight process, there were no performance indicators for the plant that were other than 'green' (very low risk) and no inspection findings that were 'greater than green' (that is, none of the findings exceeded very low safety significance)," commission officials said. "As a result, Vermont Yankee will continue to receive the NRC's normal level of oversight for the remainder of 2014, barring any changes."

The normal level of oversight is still rigorous, consisting of "a detailed regime entailing thousands of hours of inspection," the officials said. "In 2013, the NRC devoted approximately 5,940 hours of inspection at Vermont Yankee, a boiling-water reactor that began operations in 1972 and that is scheduled to permanently cease operations in late 2014."

Parent company Entergy

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Corp. of Louisiana announced in August that it would close the plant in late 2014 due to financial issues and changes in the natural gas market that has made it more difficult for Vermont Yankee to compete in the power production market, Entergy officials said at the time.

In March, the Vermont Public Service Board issued a "certificate of public good" to Entergy, allowing Vermont Yankee to operate through 2014 after it had been operating on an expired certificate.

The certificate is required of all utilities, and must be issued by the Public Service Board to determine whether the facility serves the good of the state.

The certificate was granted with conditions, including that Entergy spend millions of dollars to promote economic development in Windham County as hundreds of jobs will be lost when the plant closes.

■ The meeting will be held Wednesday, May 28, at 6:30 p.m. in the auditorium of Brattleboro Union High School, 131 Fairgrounds Road.