

Three Mile Island Alert

November 1999 Is Not Good Enough for Y2K Fixes

from a July 8, 1999, NIRS Press Release

The Nuclear Information and Resource Service gave the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Y2K program failing grades today, based on the agency's admission that 35 nuclear reactors still haven't resolved their problems with the well-known computer bug.

NIRS noted that several of these reactors aren't even scheduled to complete their fixes until November 1999--or even later--which leaves virtually no time for testing and further adjustment to their repairs.

"The NRC's program is unacceptable," said NIRS' executive director Michael Mariotte. "It's what we feared all along--this agency is waiting until the last minute and then just hoping that everything will work out ok. But with nuclear reactors, there is no margin for error. Simply hoping for the best is a sure indication that the worst can happen."

According to the NRC, which released preliminary information about the status of nuclear reactors and the Y2K issue yesterday, 35 reactors are not yet "Y2K ready," although all were supposed to be ready by July 1, 1999. Moreover, as noted yesterday by Rep. Edward Markey (D-Mass.), the concept of Y2K ready does not mean "Y2K compliant." In fact, for the nuclear industry, "Y2K ready" can mean simply turning back the clock to 1972 and hoping everything works properly.

"Obviously, the nuclear utilities still have an enormous amount of work to do to repair their computer systems for the next century," said Mary Olson, NIRS' Y2K specialist. "The NRC is trying to put the best spin possible on this problem, but the fact is some utilities just aren't going to be ready in time. Experts agree that no nuclear power will be needed in the U.S. on January 1, 2000--there will be plenty

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NRC Assurances of Y2K Readiness Not Supported by Facts

by: Scott Portzline, TMIA

Despite assurances by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) that nuclear plants are tested and ready for the new millennium, internal and external Y2K problems can trigger a nuclear accident.

There is a safety test which is not deemed necessary by the industry but which should be performed at each plant. Three Mile Island Alert (TMIA) is recommending that plants conduct a 96-hour test of their Emergency Diesel Generators (EDGs). Plants would not have to shut down for this test. Currently, the NRC requires a yearly 24-hour test which history shows is too short to reveal hidden safety problems.

During a "station blackout" (loss of offsite power) these generators supply the electricity needed to

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Three Mile Island Alert

Three Mile Island Alert (TMIA) is a non-profit citizens' organization dedicated to the promotion of safe-energy alternatives to nuclear power, especially to the Three Mile Island nuclear plant.

Formed in 1977 after the construction and licensing of TMI Unit-1 and the construction of the infamous Unit-2, TMIA is the largest and oldest safe-energy group in central Pennsylvania.

TMIA members interested in specific aspects of nuclear power are encouraged to join one of TMIA's committees. These committees include:

- Radiation Monitoring
- Low-level Radioactive Waste
- Health Effects of TMI
- Nuclear Plant Security

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NRC Official Tells TMI-Area Residents Industry Inspection Hours Have Not Been Cut

from a March 29, 1999, Inside NRC article

NRC Executive Director for Operations Williams Travers told Central Pennsylvania residents concerned about NRC retrenchment that the agency had not cut inspection hours. "We have not cut inspection hours," Travers said at a forum commemorating the 20th anniversary of the 1979 accident at GPU Nuclear's Three Mile Island Unit-2. "We are using new tools," Travers told participants in the forum held March 25 near Harrisburg, PA. The forum was broadcast live on the Internet.

Travers was challenged by fellow panelist Eric Epstein, a long-time anti-nuclear activist and member of TMIA.

"I heard (Chairman Shirley) Jackson say (to the Senate oversight committee that) you were going to cut inspection hours and that has been implemented," Epstein told Travers.

Travers did not retract or amend his statement, despite the challenge, but instead spoke of Jackson's and his own commitment to safety and cited improvements in industry statistics on scrams and safety system actuations.

A copy of Jackson's July 30, 1998, speech before the Senate Environmental & Public Works' Subcommittee on Clean Air, Wetlands, Private Property, and Nuclear Safety shows that she did make such a statement. "While the NRC believes that the basic focus and emphases of its inspection and enforcement programs are sound, we agree that improvements are needed in both areas. The average

number of inspection hours has, in fact, decreased ...," Jackson told the Senate. Similarly, at the agency's recent Regulatory Information Conference, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation Director Sam Collins said that the agency's new reactor oversight process was expected to lead to a 10% to 15% reduction in inspection hours. ‡

Anderson Low Volume Air Sampler Radiation Detector For Sale

This unit samples between 30 - 80 liters per minute. The unit uses a 2" diameter fiberglass filter and 2" diameter cartridge, a Gast direct vacuum pump, an inline 5 micron filter meter, a Tylan R032 mass flow meter/controller, and an elapsed time meter. All components, except the filter holder, are contained in a louvered metal shelter.

The Low Volume Sampler is operated and maintained by the Department of Physics and Astronomy at Dickinson College for the EFMR Monitoring Group. The Sampler was recently used as a control station to monitor radiation trends near Three Mile Island. The station is located in Carlisle PA, 35 miles from TMI.

The Anderson Low Volume Sampler was purchased new for \$8,400 dollars.

Please contact Eric Epstein, Coordinator of the EFMR Monitoring Group for information and bids.

Email: ee Epstein@igc.apc.org
 Phone: (717) 541-1101

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of electrical generation available. For that reason, we join with our colleagues across the globe in calling for a nuclear moratorium on January 1 — a shutdown of all nuclear facilities across the world. Who knows, we may find we can live without them permanently?"

In December 1998, NIRS submitted three petitions for rulemaking to the NRC. One would require any utility not fully Y2K-compliant by December 1, 1999 to be closed until it can prove it is Y2K-compliant. Thus far, the NRC has not indicated that any reactor will be Y2K-compliant by December 1, 1999.

NIRS is also actively working to provide assistance to Eastern-bloc utilities that suffer from Y2K problems with their reactors and electrical grids.

"More U.S. assistance is necessary for many Eastern countries to ensure that January 1, 2000, is not a time of meltdown, but of celebration," said Olson. "The U.S. Congress needs to recognize that several Eastern countries need help in basic Y2K work and in enabling the implementation of meaningful contingency plans. Such assistance is of little cost to the U.S., but will be of great benefit if meltdowns and electrical grid disruptions can be avoided."

The following U.S. reactors are not "Y2K ready" -- no reactor claims to be "Y2K compliant":

Beaver Valley, Units 1 and 2; Shippingport, PA, 9/30/99.

Browns Ferry, Units 2 and 3; Athens, AL, 10/31/99.

Brunswick, Unit 1; Southport, NC, 11/30/99.

Clinton; Clinton, IL, 9/22/99.

Comanche Peak, Unit 2; Glen Rose, TX, 10/30/99.

Comanche Peak, Unit 1; Glen Rose, TX, 11/30/99.

D.C. Cook, Units 1 and 2; Bridgman, MI 12/15/99.

Davis-Besse; Port Clinton, OH, 8/1/99.

Diablo Canyon, Units 1 and 2; San Luis Obispo, CA, 10/31/99.

Farley, Unit 2; Columbia, AL, 12/16/99.

Hope Creek; Hancocks Bridge, NJ, 10/29/99.

Limerick, Unit 2; Limerick, PA, 9/30/99.

Monticello; Monticello, MN, 9/1/99.

North Anna, Unit 2; Mineral, VA, 10/29/99.

Oyster Creek; Toms River, NJ, 9/30/99.

Peach Bottom, Unit 2; Delta, PA, 9/30/99.

Peach Bottom, Unit 3; Delta, PA, 10/31/99.

Perry; Perry, OH, 8/1/99.

Salem, Unit 1; Wilmington, DE, 11/6/99.

Salem, Unit 2; Hancocks, NJ, 10/29/99.

Sequoyah, Units 1 and 2; Soddy-Daisy, TN, 10/31/99.

South Texas, Units 1 and 2; Bay City, TX, 10/31/99.

St. Lucie, Units 1 and 2; Fort Pierce, FL, 7/15/99.

Three Mile Island, Unit 1; Middletown, PA, 10/21/99.

Turkey Point, Units 3 and 4; Florida City, FL, 7/15/99.

Vermont Yankee; Vernon, VT, 10/31/99.

Watts Bar; Spring City, TN, 10/31/99. ‡

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or

Nuclear Information & Resource Service
202-328-0002, nirsnet@nirs.org
Camp Info: www.nirs.org

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A week long gathering focused on skills building, networking, and nonviolent public demonstration to protect the Great lakes and work toward a sustainable energy future.

For more info, call 1-800-363-4522 (toll free)

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bring the plant to a safe shutdown.

If they fail, the chance of an accident approaches certainty. Former NRC Chairman Dr. Shirley Jackson said, "NRC reviews in recent years have left no doubt that a station blackout at a nuclear power station is a major contributor to reactor core damage frequency." Nearly every month, the EDGs fail at a nuclear plant; fortunately not during a station blackout.

When a tornado struck the Davis Besse plant (same design as TMI) in Ohio in June 1998, for 41 nervous hours an array of equipment problems complicated efforts to keep the reactor under control. One of the two EDGs overheated and the other failed briefly due to a faulty relay switch. It was a close call which caused the plant's emergency director to say, "For a few minutes your

heart goes up into your throat."

This station blackout also caused the temperature of the spent fuel pool to increase to the point where water would be lost. Nuclear plants currently don't have an emergency power supply for these pools. A petition has been filed by the Nuclear Information and Resource Services (NIRS) to add this safety feature.

Fires have temporarily knocked out the EDGs at the Limerick and Crystal River nuclear plants in recent years. Six years ago, TMI's EDGs were inoperable for one month before the problem was discovered. Last year, TMI's EDGs were labeled a "fire hazard" by an NRC administrator who said they were as "ugly as I have ever seen" because of leaking oil. TMI has since "cleaned up" that situation.

At a June 15, 1999, Y2K meeting between the NRC and the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI), I recounted what the administrator said about TMI. The vice-president of NEI answered, "So what? As long as they are up to regulations." This is the same kind of arrogance that led to the TMI accident.

The NRC does not draw a clear line for Y2K safety. The General Accounting Office (GAO) stated that despite six major reviews over two decades of NRC regulatory oversight, the NRC still does not adequately define safety. For example: the very same valve which caused the loss-of-coolant accident at TMI 20 years ago is still not rated as a safety component.

The NRC's assurances that all safety systems are Y2K ready does not rest well with TMIA. When Peach Bottom lost its safety parameter display for seven hours during a Y2K test [see story, p. 7], the NRC claimed that safety wasn't compromised. This system was added to every plant as a result of the TMI accident. Sometimes the NRC's judgment defies common sense. The GAO is now recommending that state public utility commissions publicize descriptions of the probable and worst case Y2K scenarios.

The NRC will permit plants to violate their licenses to keep them online come January 1, 2000. This situation is reminiscent of the Challenger explosion where rocket engineers were literally told to "remove your engineering hats and put on your management hats" to get the "green light" for the mission.

Resident inspectors at each plant will grant safety exemptions to plants in an effort to protect grid stability rather than public health and safety from radioactivity (which is the NRC's statutory mandate).

With millions of lives at stake, the NRC would do well to strengthen the emergency diesel generators by thorough testing and requiring an additional backup power source as petitioned by NIRS. The NRC is more than two months late for its own deadline for responding to the NIRS petitions.

For more information see our website: www.tmia.com/Y2K.htm

Y2K Email Discussion List

From an email announcement by Mike Ewall, Nukenet List Administrator

We have recently started an email discussion list on Y2K problems and nuclear safety. You can join it by filling out a subscription form at <http://www.enviroweb.org/nukenet> or you can send a message to listproc@envirolink.org with this phrase in the body of the message:

subscribe y2k-nukes Your Name

[Please put your real name where it says "Your Name"] ‡

TMI + 20: Americans Oppose Nuclear Power, Support Renewables

from recent articles in The Nuclear Monitor (Nuclear Information and Resource Service) and The Net Works (Pennsylvania Environmental Network)

Twenty years after the Three Mile Island accident, the long-term effects of the near-disaster are clear: Americans are against construction of new nuclear reactors and would prefer to obtain their electricity from renewable resources.

That was not the case before TMI — back then, most Americans supported an ambitious nuclear construction program. But within a year of the accident, public opinion began to shift. By mid-1980, a slim majority of the public opposed new reactors, a level that quickly rose to 60% and has not changed much since.

A new poll, conducted in early March for the Sustainable Energy Coalition, found that 59.8% of Americans oppose new reactors, despite a multi-million dollar effort by the nuclear industry to portray nuclear power as environmentally sound and an appropriate response to global warming.

The opposition to new nuclear construction cut across party lines and age groups, with young Democrats showing the highest level of opposition. Sixty-nine percent of all those polled think an accident like TMI is likely to occur again; only 28.4% think such an accident is unlikely. A solid 61.5% of Americans would prefer that renewables provide their electricity.

Only one nuclear power question remains divisive in the U.S.: whether to phase out existing reactors. On this

question, Americans are evenly divided — 43.3 % in favor of phasing out nuclear power and 43.8% opposed to phasing out nuclear power. The bad news for the nuclear industry is that young people between the ages of 18 and 34 favor closing existing reactors by a margin of 50.2% to 39.5%.

During the twentieth anniversary commemoration of the partial core meltdown at Three Mile Island Unit 2 in Middletown, PA, five of us crossed the line and got arrested, carrying two banners onto TMI's property. At 5:00 am on March 28th, the Executive Director of the Washington, D.C.-based Nuclear Information and Resource Service (Michael Mariotte) as well as two PEN activists (Traci Confer and Mike Ewall) joined long-time Harrisburg activist Gene Stilp and Marci Culley in a act of civil disobedience. We were charged with criminal trespass and the company didn't drop the charges (even though they reported to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission that the demonstration was "peaceful"). When it got to court, the arresting officers agreed to lower the charges from misdemeanors to summaries (a summary offense is like getting a speeding ticket) and we were all fined \$190 each.

The action concluded a two-hour-long peaceful rally of well over 100 activists who joined together in the dreary cold and rainy morning. Several speakers took the opportunity to inform people that TMI could very well

happen again, and not too far in the future (read January 1, 2000).

So far, none of the nuclear utilities is Y2K complaint. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission isn't even requiring compliance. They're requiring "readiness" (meaning things will work after the rollover, but just not work correctly). They've adopted this for only the safety-related systems, which have been defined NOT TO include the control systems, security systems and radiation monitoring systems. The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission had given until March 31st, 1999, for all PA utilities to be compliant. The nuclear utilities made it clear months ago that they don't plant to meet that date. The prospect of multiple TMIs or Chernobyls within the next year is all too real.

Also during the anniversary commemoration, at a TMIA-sponsored dinner, Dr. Steve Wing of the University of North Carolina explained his criticisms of TMI accident consequences studies. Wing said that earlier studies, which purport to show no effects from the accident, were based on the assumption that little radiation was released at the time of the accident. But since no one actually knows how much radiation was released (monitoring at the time was poor, and some monitors went off-scale), Wing approached the issue from a new perspective. His work shows a clear linkage between excess cancers in the area and radiation exposure, as deter-

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Red Cross: What You Should Know About Y2K

from a Red Cross publication

What is "Y2K" and why are people concerned?

The Year 2000 technology problem, or bug, as it is sometimes called, was created in the early days of computers, when memory in computers was scarce and expensive. Programmers took shortcuts whenever possible to save space. Instead of using a four-digit code for year dates, a two-digit entry was used. This practice persisted, long after the need for saving space was eliminated. The two-digit code also was used in em-

bedded chips, which exist in many devices that control processes, functions, machines (like cars), building ventilation systems, elevators, and fire and security alarm systems, which are part of our everyday lives.

When the year 2000 comes, programs that have been coded with two-digit year codes will not distinguish between the years 2000 and 1900. If the program includes time-sensitive calculations or comparisons, results are unpredictable. No one knows what problems may occur, how widespread

they may be, or how long they will last. The good news is that federal, state, and local governments; banks and other financial institutions; retail businesses, and every other group affected by this problem have been working to resolve it, and a great deal of progress has been made.

The potential effect of the Y2K technology problem on any of these areas is unknown, and the situation continues to change as federal, state, and local governments; industries; businesses; and organizations, as well as the general public, take actions to reduce the problem. Most experts, however, believe that there may be localized disruptions. For example, in some areas, electrical power may be unavailable for some time. Manufacturing and production industries may be disrupted. Roads may be closed or gridlocked if traffic signals are disrupted. Electronic credit card transactions may not be processed. Telephone systems may not work.

Because no one can be certain about the effects of the Y2K problem, the American Red Cross has developed the following checklist for you. These are some easy steps you can take to prepare for possible disruptions. All of these recommendations make good sense, regardless of the potential problem.

Y2K Checklist

— Check with manufacturers of any essential computer-controlled electronic equipment in your home to see

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Pennsylvania Nukes Least Prepared for Y2K

by Mike Ewall, Pennet Administrator

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) recently released their report on which of the 103 operating nuclear reactors are going to be Y2K "ready" (ready means less than compliant - the NRC only requires "readiness" of only the narrowly-defined "safety-related" systems at reactors).

Thirty-five were still not ready as of the NRC's reporting deadline of June 30th, 1999. Pennsylvania led the nation in unprepared reactors.

Even though Illinois has more reactors than Pennsylvania, Illinois had only 1 "not ready" reactor. Pennsylvania has six. New Jersey, Florida and Texas are the runners-up with 4 unprepared reactors each. The unprepared Pennsylvania reactors are Beaver Valley 1 & 2, Limerick 2, Peach Bottom 2 & 3, and Three Mile Island 1.

Beaver Valley's Y2K schedule had a major slip. Last year, they were projecting they'd be "ready" by the first quarter of 1999. They now expect to be "ready" by 9/30/1999. This 6 month slip is something that other utilities haven't even given themselves the luxury of doing. Since last year, Limerick, Peach Bottom and Three Mile Island have been projecting dates in the fall of 1999. A missed deadline for any of them could be too late.

Moreover, Pennsylvania's nuclear utilities are insisting on keeping their Y2K filings with the PA Public Utility Commission (PUC) secret. On July 6th, I filed responses to the petitions for Protective Order of the Pennsylvania's 4 nuclear utilities. These responses are available at: <http://www.penweb.org/issues/Y2K/>

Big Glitch at Peach Bottom Shows Perils of Y2K

from a March 7, 1999, Washington Post article

In a sterile room filled with rows of hulking 1960s-era mainframes, complete with panels of blinking red and green lights, a half-dozen technicians at the massive nuclear power plant set out early last month to test whether one of the facility's critical computer units would understand the year 2000.

It was supposed to be a prosaic affair. The unit in question had been pored over by programmers, it had been analyzed for a week in a simulator, and it was being hooked up to a backup version of the facility's central operations monitoring system. But when the computer's clock was turned ahead to Jan. 1, 2000, something went drastically awry at the Peach Bottom Atomic Power Station.

In what experts say was one of the more serious computer glitches in recent memory at a nuclear plant, the facility's primary and backup operations monitoring systems – which provide control-room technicians with vital data about temperature, pressure and water levels in the reactor's core – crashed. Every computer screen in the plant's control room blacked out and froze, forcing technicians to rely on antiquated gauges.

Plant managers say the incident posed no risk to the public, but they nevertheless began planning to shut down the facility. They eventually scotched those efforts after the computer specialists determined the source of the problem – a technician had improperly set the test clock – and restored the systems seven hours

later.

Although the cause was human error, technology specialists say the glitch here illustrates an unanticipated peril of the Year 2000 problem: As computer systems that have been repaired are now being tested in live conditions, inadvertent mistakes and undiscovered bugs can bring the machines – and the organizations that rely on them – to a grinding halt.

"When you perform tests, you inevitably create some errors," said John C. Ballock, a Year 2000 manager for Computer Sciences Corp. With intensive Year 2000 testing taking place around the world, such glitches are "something that we're definitely going to see more of," he said.

In Missouri, for instance, about 50,000 residential customers of the Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District received incorrect bills last month after a programmer failed to remove Year 2000 test data from a billing system.

In Texas, 2,013 customers of Bank One Texas received erroneous notices in December saying they had bounced checks after an employee accidentally mailed out overdraft notices that had been printed for a date-related test.

And in Illinois, the village of Oswego got a monthly electric bill late last year for \$7 million – about \$6,989,000 more than the town normally is charged each month – because of software "bugs" in a new

computer system purchased by Commonwealth Edison Co. to address the Year 2000 issue.

Despite the glitches that have been cropping up, technology analysts say testing is a critical part of the repair effort. It makes sense, they say, to discover bugs and to deal with any instances of human error now instead of later this fall or on Jan. 1. "The fact that people are having problems now is a good thing because it at least shows they're testing," said James Woodward, a senior vice president at Cap Gemini America, an information technology firm that provides date-related repair services.

Some industry consultants have expressed worries that conducting broad tests late in the year will give companies little time to fix the problems they uncover, but they say they are encouraged by the pace of individual efforts in places like Peach Bottom. "It's good that these problems are happening now," said David Lochbaum, a nuclear safety engineer with the Union of Concerned Scientists. "You don't want this to occur on Dec. 31."

The NRC, which said the Peach Bottom incident was the first Y2K problem at a nuclear plant, appeared sympathetic to Peach Bottom's travails. "With computer software, it's hard to anticipate all the difficulties you can run into," said Jared S. Wermiel, chief of the NRC's reactor systems branch. "And too often, it's what you haven't thought of that comes back to bite you." †

PEACE

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Harrisburg-Hiroshima-Nagasaki Committee Announces 21st Annual Peacemaking Observances

July 30 - August 14: *Arts For Peace & Justice*
10th Annual Exhibition at Strawberry Square, Harrisburg

Special gallery presentation between the Atrium and 4th & Walnut St. Entrance, located across from Crafty Generations.

Gallery Hours: Strawberry Square is open from 6:00 am to 2:00 am.

Opening Reception: Friday, July 30, 1999 4:00 to 7:00 pm

Closing Reception: Saturday, August 14, 1999 1:00 to 4:00 pm

☆ Refreshments ☆ Entertainment by Musicians and Writers at both Receptions.

To exhibit in the Gallery, contact Fleur Byers: 717/774-5811.

August 8, 1998: *Candles On The Water*

Peace Garden, Riverfront Park, Harrisburg

Join with Peacemakers from many faith communities as we speak, pray and sing of peace from various traditions and float our lighted candle boats of peace on the Susquehanna at Sundown.

Gather at Temple Ohev Sholom, 2345 N. Front Street at 7:00 pm
and walk to the Peace Garden at 7:30 pm.

The Lantern Boats are decorated with peace themes by children of St. Theresa's School CCD Day Camp, New Cumberland. Everyone is welcome to the beauty and harmony that is Candles!

For information on both events, contact Deborah Davenport at 717/763-9552.



(*"RED CROSS," continued from page 6*)

if that equipment may be affected. This includes fire and security alarm systems, programmable thermostats, appliances, consumer electronics, garage door openers, electronic locks, and any other electronic equipment in which an "embedded chip" may control its operation.

— Stock disaster supplies to last several days to a week for yourself and those who live with you. This includes having nonperishable foods, stored water, and an ample supply of prescription and nonprescription medications that you regularly use.

— Have some extra cash or traveler's checks on hand in case electronic transactions involving ATM cards, credit cards, and the like cannot be processed. Keep cash or traveler's

checks in a safe place, and withdraw money from your bank in small amounts well in advance of 12/31/99.

— Keep your automobile gas tank above half full.

— In case the power fails, plan to use alternative cooking devices in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

— Have extra blankets, coats, hats, and gloves to keep warm. Do not use gas-fueled appliances, like an oven, as an alternative heating source. The same goes for wood-burning or liquid-fueled heating devices that are not designed to be used in a residential structure. If you do purchase an alternative heating device, make sure it is approved for use indoors and is UL-listed.

— Have plenty of flashlights and extra batteries on hand. Don't use candles for emergency lighting.

— Be prepared to relocate to a shelter for warmth and protection during a prolonged power outage. Listen to a battery-operated radio or television for information about where shelters will be available.

— If you plan to use a portable generator, connect what you want to power directly to the generator; do not connect the generator to your home's electrical system. Also, be sure to keep a generator in a well-ventilated area — either outside or in a garage, keeping the door open. Don't put a generator in your basement or anywhere inside your home. ‡



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Membership: \$20 Regular Member \$50 Sustaining Member

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Intervention Fund Contribution: \$10 \$20 \$50 \$100

Checks of \$50 or more can be made payable to the TMI Legal Fund for tax deduction purposes.

RETURN TO: TMIA, 315 Peffer Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102

The official registration and financial information for Three Mile Island Alert may be obtained from the PA Department of State by calling toll free, within PA, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Three Mile Island To Be Sold

from an April 13, 1999, Associated Press article and other sources

Only one more hurdle remains to be cleared in the sale of the Unit 1 reactor at Three Mile Island, a deal that would create the first foreign ownership of a nuclear power plant in the United States. GPU Nuclear Corp. wants to sell the 870-megawatt generating station near Middletown to the British-American partnership AmerGen for \$100 million. (AmerGen was

formed by PECO Energy Co. of Philadelphia and British Energy, the largest electricity generator in the United Kingdom.)

The sale has already received the blessings of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and state utility commissions in Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey. GPU is based in New Jersey and operates in the other two states.

The final hurdle is approval from the Internal Revenue Service. The IRS will review the tax status of about \$320 million GPU has set aside for decommissioning of the plant when its operational life runs out. AmerGen wants funds to be transferred essentially tax-free, said PECO spokesman Bill Jones.

The sale does not include Three Mile Island's dormant Unit 2 reactor, which is expected to be decommissioned at the same time as Unit 1. Unit 1's license is set to expire in 2014, although AmerGen can ask the NRC for an extension.

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mined by the radiation pathway at the time of the accident.

Wing noted that while he and his co-researchers have been attacked personally by the nuclear industry, no one has ever been able to challenge their findings.

"As far as lock, stock and barrel, this is the first plant to change hands outright," NRC spokesman Neil Sheehan said of the deal that the NRC approved. Portions of ownership at nuclear plants have changed hands in the past, Sheehan said.

TMIA Alert

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