

Nuc...brief & link

2006-01-30 UT 02:40

NFCC Nuclear Fuel Cycle Consulting

FPL Group Inc. and Constellation Energy announced that they have signed a definitive agreement to create the United States' largest competitive energy supplier and its second-largest electric utility portfolio. The transaction will create a company with a market capitalization of approximately \$28 billion (based on current market values), combined annual revenues of \$27 billion, and \$57 billion in total assets. The combined company will be named Constellation Energy. **Each company has established itself as a leading nuclear operator and combining the fleets offers significant potential for increased savings and efficiencies.** FPL Group operates five nuclear power units in Florida and New Hampshire. Constellation Energy operates five nuclear power units in Maryland and New York. Both companies have a stated growth and consolidation strategy in the nuclear arena. **Press release:** <http://www.fplenergy.com/news/contents/05140.shtml>.

Georgia Power and Southern Nuclear Operating Company announced the companies are pursuing the Westinghouse AP1000 as the nuclear reactor technology for potential new nuclear units at the Vogtle Electric Generating Plant. The companies said the Plant Vogtle Early Site Permit (ESP) and Combined Construction and Operating License (COL) applications will be based on the AP1000 design. "We believe the Westinghouse AP1000 is the best nuclear technology option available at this time," said Louis Long, vice president of Technical Support for Southern Nuclear. "Our decision comes after researching the next generation of available nuclear reactors." **Press release:** <http://newsinfo.southernco.com/article.asp?mnuType=sub&mnuItem=ni&id=1964&mnuOpco=gpc&category=0> Westinghouse Electric Co. President and CEO **Steve Tritch** said that he was pleased with the selection of the AP1000. The AP1000 received Design Certification from the NRC on Dec. 31, 2005. It is the **only Generation III+ nuclear power plant to have received either Final Design Approval or Design Certification** from the NRC. **Press release by Westinghouse:** <http://www.prnewswire.com/cgi-bin/stories.pl?ACCT=104&STORY=/www/story/01-27-2006/0004269395&EDATE=>

NUCLEAR POLICY

Russian state-controlled gas giant Gazprom could expand into nuclear power generation under a Kremlin plan, the *Vedomosti* business daily reported. Under the plan, Gazprom would build and control the nuclear plants, while the

fall in demand for gas-fueled electricity generation would enable the company to export more of its gas to lucrative foreign markets. News in Russian: <http://www.vedomosti.ru/newspaper/index.shtml?2006/01/27> English: <http://www.mosnews.com/money/2006/01/27/gazpromnuclear.shtml>

At the St. Petersburg summit of the **Eurasian Economic Community (EEC)** [sic!], **Uzbekistan** officially joined the organization. Excerpts from a **Joint Statement on the Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy**: "Concrete plans are being drawn up for expanding cooperation between the nuclear energy sector enterprises in our countries. [...] Uzbekistan's accession to the Eurasian Economic Community creates additional new opportunities for building a nuclear-fuel component that will serve as a reliable element in our energy supply policy for the long term. [...] The creation of a system of international centres providing nuclear fuel cycle services, including enrichment, on a non-discriminatory basis and under the control of the IAEA, could become a key element in developing this new infrastructure." Tenex said: "Specific terms and agreements adopted by the presidents of the three countries will be eventually developed and implemented by **Tenex, NAK Kazatomprom** in Kazakhstan and **Navoysk Mining-and-Metallurgical Integrated Plant** in Uzbekistan." **Statement:**
<http://www.tenex.ru/digest/evrozed.html>

Great Britain: Alan Johnson, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, has vowed that the **Government will make a definitive decision on whether to build new nuclear reactors this summer.** Speaking exclusively to *The Independent*, just days after launching a fresh energy review, Mr Johnson said that a decision would be made after consideration of the review. The review will last for three months and will **report to the Energy minister, Malcolm Wicks, in April.** **News:**

<http://news.independent.co.uk/business/news/article341625.ece>

Bulgaria: Building a new nuclear power plant in Belene, in the north of Bulgaria, is necessary considering the country's need of energy resources, Economy and Energy Minister Rumen Ovcharov said before parliament. **News:**
http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=58353

URANIUM

Paladin Resources Ltd. has secured a second sales contract for a portion of its yellowcake production from the Langer Heinrich Uranium Mining Operation, scheduled for commissioning in September 2006. This latest **sales arrangement with a US utility is for the purchase of 2,080,000lbs U3O8 for delivery between 2007 and 2012.**

Press release:

http://www.paladinresources.com.au/aurora/assets/user_content/File/01.27.06_Another_yellowcake_sales_contract%20secured%20for%20LH.pdf

Global Gold Corporation announced the acquisition of the Getik gold and uranium exploration property in the northeast of **Armenia**. It expands Global Gold's activities beyond its operations in the North Central Armenian belt. Global also holds joint venture interests with Iberian Resources and a twenty percent participation right in any new exploration undertaken in Armenia by Sterlite Gold or its successors. **Release:**
<http://globalgoldcorp.com/globalgoldcorp/news/20060125release.php>

Santoy Resources Ltd. announced the resolution of the title dispute which has

delayed the implementation of a technical program to evaluate the amenability of developing the Blizzard Uranium deposit in the Greenwood Mining Division of south-central British Columbia. **Press release:**

<http://www.ccnmatthews.com/news/releases/show.jsp?action=showRelease&searchText=false&showText=all&actionFor=577662>

REACTORS, NPPs, UTILITIES

There have been problems at the Palo Verde nuclear power plant, some identified by the licensee (Arizona Public Service) and some by the NRC, that have challenged the plant safety systems (people, facilities and procedures). Based on these problems and events, **NRC has assessed the licensee's performance and has degraded it in certain areas.** This does not mean the operation is unsafe.

The licensee experienced several events at the Palo Verde plant, which the NRC determined warranted special inspections to determine the causes and adequacy of the licensee's responses. A few of them were:

- Steam generator tube leak in Unit 2
- Response to loss of offsite power in all three units
- Follow-up on identification of significant voiding in the Emergency Core Cooling System at all three units
- Follow-up on identification of potential design issue in Emergency Core Cooling System at all three units
- Follow-up on operating at reduced power due to high pipe vibrations.

Statement by NRC's responsible Regional Administrator:

<http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/news/2006/06-001iv.html>

FPL Energy, a subsidiary of FPL Group announced the completion of the purchase of a majority interest in the Duane Arnold NPP from Interstate Power and Light a subsidiary of Alliant Energy Corp. FPL purchased IPL's 70 percent interest in Duane Arnold for a total of approximately \$373 million, including nuclear fuel, inventory and other items. **Press release:**

http://home.businesswire.com/portal/site/google/index.jsp?ndmViewId=news_view&newsId=20060127005492&newsLang=en

NUCLEAR INDUSTRY

AMEC NNC, the subsidiary company of AMEC Nuclear Holdings Ltd, has acquired 50.2 per cent of the **Romanian nuclear company Stevenson & Associates SRL.** **Press release:**

<http://www.amec.com/news/mediareleasedetails.asp?Pageid=876&MediaID=1110>

STORAGE AND WASTE

USA: A final round of review begins next week on a plan to put **dry cask storage on the grounds of Vermont Yankee NPP.** The casks are necessary to keep the plant running until 2012, when its federal license and power contract with the state expire. News: <http://www.reformer.com/Stories/0,1413,102~8860~3218048,00.html>

DECOMMISSIONING, CLEAN-UP

Great Britain: The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's chairman, Sir Anthony Cleaver,

opposes a quick sale of British Nuclear Group in the belief that its value will rise if it wins some of Britain's decommissioning contracts. The first of £56 billion of contracts may be awarded this year. His chief executive, Ian Roxburgh, disagrees. He thinks BNG will stand a greater chance of winning contracts if it is part of a larger group and should be sold sooner rather than later. News from: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2095-2014278,00.html>

REPOSITORIES

The **German Office of Radiation Protection** has reacted to expert reports in the nuclear journal *Atomwirtschaft* which criticized its conceptual strategy concerning final disposal. In German: http://www.bfs.de/endlager/publikatione/n/Diskussion_Einzelfragen_Endlagerung.html

MISCELLANEOUS

India: Scientists of the Atomic Research Centre (BARC) in Mumbai have published a paper on "**Physics design of a safe and economic thorium reactor**". "The ATBR [A Thorium Breeder Reactor] combines the merits of existing heavy water and light water reactor technologies and is tailor-made for large scale utilization of thorium." **Paper**

published in *Current Science*: <http://www.ias.ac.in/currsci/jan102006/48.pdf>

The **U.S. National Climatic Data Center updated its list of billion dollar weather and climate disasters**. The U.S. has sustained 67 weather-related disasters during the 1980-2005 period in which overall damages and costs reached or exceeded \$1 billion at the time of the event. **The total normalized losses from the 67 events in the USA are over \$500 billion.** Press release and more: <http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2/006/s2566.htm>

AND FINALLY THIS

Is sound-fusion sound? A team of researchers from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Purdue University, and the Russian Academy of Sciences has used sound waves to induce nuclear fusion without the need for an external neutron source, according to a paper in the Jan. 27 issue of *Physical Review Letters*. The technique, which has been dubbed "sonofusion," produces a shock wave that has the potential to fuse nuclei together. **Press release** by Rensselaer: [http://news.rpi.edu/update.do?artcenterkey=1322&setappvar=page\(1\)](http://news.rpi.edu/update.do?artcenterkey=1322&setappvar=page(1))

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