

## Plant Receives Upgrade



CALLAWAY COUNTY - A steam cloud can usually be seen over part of Callaway County, but that's been missing lately. Ameren has made major upgrades on their nuclear plant, and two months and \$300 million later, the plant is almost ready to re-open.

At first glance it might look like a scene from a sci-fi movie, but the glow of Callaway County is actually the glow of a nuclear fuel assembly.

"After the first 20 years of operation we have rejuvenated the plant. It's basically ready for the next 20 and the 20 beyond that," Ameren Chief Nuclear Officer Chuck Naslund said.

More than 3,000 contractors, from all 50 states and nine countries are working to finish the \$300 million upgrade, all in hopes of extending the Plant's operating license past 2024.

"The electric generator actually produced the electricity. And on an average day during the year that one generator produces about 20 to 25% of all the electricity on the Ameren-UE system," Ameren Public Relations Official Mike Cleary said.

But it's the new 400 ton steam generators that have made up the bulk of this improvement. It took a month long journey from France, to New Orleans, under the St. Louis Arch and finally into the Callaway Plant. The generators turn the turbines in the top of the Callaway Plant. The turbine floor is about the size of a football field. During the shutdown and refueling process workers here are replacing all four turbines. Total cost about \$60 million.

"Over time all of our costs eventually show up in your bill but if we have offsetting savings like more power using the same amount of fuel, that can help pay for this without raising rates," Ameren Officials said.

Ultimately, the Missouri Public Service Commission gets to decide how much Ameren can increase rates. This decision won't be made until at least 2007.

Kay Drey of the Nuclear Information and Resource Service thinks the Plant is doing anything but improving.

"I do have a whole drawer on steam generators. It's my favorite faulty part," Drey said.

Drey has been fighting the Callaway Plant since before it was even built. Since 1974 I've been studying this technology.

"The more I study it the less I like it," Drey said. "You could lose a piece of the United States the size of Pennsylvania. That can happen. There can be very serious accidents."

Drey says the Plant is dangerous even during normal operation.

"Every nuclear power plant releases radioactive gases, radioactive liquid waste into the environment. It does not take an accident," Drey said. "Gee just read this... If your protective clothing gets ripped, torn, or wet, you must leave the area immediately."

But regardless of whether this plant is safe or dangerous, or whether it makes electric bills higher or lower, it will be back online, stronger than ever. Ameren says the upgrades will increase the total output of the plant by 60 mega watts, that's about 5% more power.

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