

AEP putting \$70M into Mich. nuclear plant

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American Electric Power Company Inc.'s (AEP) Michigan nuclear unit is getting more than \$70 million in capital improvements as part of a routine refueling.

The Columbus-based company said one of its two Cook Nuclear Plant units went off line Sept. 15 to begin a refueling outage, a necessity for a nuclear reactor every 18 months. The unit last went down in spring 2006 before running nearly 500 days, a record for the 650-acre site located in southwest Michigan.

Company spokesman Bill Schalk said the \$70 million in capital improvements to the nuclear site includes a new 17-foot-wide, 100-ton head to the reactor's vessel, a key component to its power production. The vessel head at the company's other reactor was replaced last year. The newest replacement head took six years to make.

In addition to replacing the reactor vessel head, AEP is adding 1,500 contract workers to the plant's 1,400-person staff for projects that will improve the reliability and stability of the reactor. AEP estimates the replacement and capital improvements will take 265,000 hours of manpower to complete.

The two nuclear reactors at the Cook Nuclear Plant serve customers in Michigan and Indiana to the south. Both reactors produce enough power to support more than 1.5 million homes. The power generated at the Cook plant, the only nuclear facility the company operates, makes up about 6 percent of AEP's total generation.

AEP delivers electricity to 5 million customers in 11 states.

Editor's note: In March 2006, APS and Doosan Heavy Industries and Construction signed an agreement authorizing Doosan to manufacture replacement reactor heads for Palo Verde units 1, 2 and 3.