

April 17, 2009

OPG STAFF UP TO CHALLENGE OF DARLINGTON OUTAGE
Vacuum Building testing undertaken at time of low demand for electricity

Clarington, Ont. – All four units at the Darlington Nuclear station east of Toronto will be taken out of service this week to allow for scheduled testing and inspections of the vacuum building as required by the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC). Units 1, 2 and 4 will be out of service for four to six weeks, while Unit 3 will be out longer for a planned maintenance outage.

“This is a challenge because we know the people of Ontario are counting on us to have the station back up for the summer, but we’ve got the best people in the business so I’m confident we’re up to the task,” said Tom Mitchell OPG’s Chief Nuclear Officer.

Mitchell said a key element in his confidence was the months of planning and preparation that have gone into the project.

“There’s an old saying ‘measure twice, cut once’. This project uses that philosophy on a much larger scale. We have more than 35,000 tasks to complete in a short period. The only way we can do that safely and efficiently is by taking the time and effort up front to plan it right.”

George Smitherman, Ontario’s Energy and Infrastructure Minister, sees the outage as an opportunity to bring public attention to energy conservation.

“While our energy supply during this planned outage will reliably meet Ontario’s needs, it’s also a good time for Ontarians to think about ways to save energy,” said Smitherman. “With Energy Conservation Week coming up (May 17-23) we all have an opportunity to be more energy efficient. That’s good for the environment, our electricity system and our wallets.”

The vacuum building is an important safety system so every 12 years the CNSC requires Darlington to inspect and test the building and the related components. The outage is approved by Ontario’s Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO), which has responsibility for ensuring there is enough electricity to meet expected needs. Demand for power is traditionally low in the spring.

Darlington Nuclear has had outstanding performance in recent years. In 2008 the station operated the top three Candu units in the world. The VBO will cause the station performance ratings to drop this year.

Ontario Power Generation (OPG) is celebrating its 10th year of serving the province. Building on a proud history, OPG provides the people and industry of Ontario with clean, safe and reliable electricity - just as it's always done.

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