GSU official cites River Bend operating record

Baker-Zachary bureau

Gulf States Utilities Co.'s River Bend nuclear plant has been in commercial operation less than nine months but already has exceeded the industry average in important operational categories, according to a GSU spokesman.

"We are proud that River Bend was built more than four years faster than comparable nuclear plants and has received high marks for safety and quality of its construction," according to GSU's Bill Benedetto. "Its impressive operating record is indicative of our commitment to continue emphasizing efficiency without compromising safety."

Since it first began supplying electricity to GSU customers in December 1985, River Bend has generated more than 4 billion kilowatt hours — enough electricity to provide service to about 350,000 average households for one year, Benedetto said.

The GSU spokesman said the 940-megawatt reactor south of St. Francisville was available for service 61 percent of the time from June 16, 1986 — when it went into commercial operation — until Feb. 28. "This compares favorably with the average availability factor of 54 percent logged by the nation's boiling water reactors in 1985, the latest available data, he said.

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