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Byron Station Unit 2 Enters Refueling Outage After 18 Months of Carbon-free Energy Production

Exelon Generation nuclear reactor produced electricity for 13,000 consecutive hours through bitter cold and blazing heat

APRIL 8, 2019

BYRON, Ill. — Byron Generating Station's Unit 2 nuclear reactor was taken offline at 1 a.m. today for a scheduled refueling and maintenance outage. The unit has powered more than 1 million homes and businesses every day since its last planned outage in October of 2017.

More than 1,300 supplemental workers will join 800 Exelon Generation employees in preparing the facility for another reliable 18-month run.

"Nearly 13,000 consecutive hours online speaks to the reliability of our nuclear plant and the important work we do to provide clean energy to the region," said Site Vice President Mark Kanavos. "Byron Station is proud to contribute to Illinois' clean energy future, while also powering our schools, hospitals and senior centers around the clock."

For several months preceding and following the outage, the influx of workers provides a significant boost to the local economy.

"Our businesses look forward to the refueling outages and many extend their hours to handle the added foot traffic," said Sarah Downs, executive director of the Byron Area Chamber of Commerce. "Many business owners count on the uptick in sales from those who are visiting the area for the outage."

In addition to replacing about one-third of the reactor's fuel, the station will continue a multi-million-dollar transformer upgrade project by replacing two main power transformers, which are used to "step up" the electricity leaving the site for transmission across power lines. Major upgrades like these ensure the plant will provide reliable power through all kinds of weather.

Byron's Unit 1 reactor will continue to supply carbon-free electricity to customers during the Unit 2 outage. With both units at full power, the site produces almost 2,500 megawatts, enough electricity to power more than 2 million average American homes. Byron Generating Station is in Ogle County, Ill., about 25 miles southwest of Rockford. Exelon Generation's nuclear units in Illinois produce half of the state's electricity and more than 90 percent of its carbon-free power.

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