



Traces of radioactivity were released via steam leak at Indian Point nuclear power plant, but officials said there was no cause for concern. Photo by Bloomberg

NUKE STEAM SCARE

BY ABBY LUBY
SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

THAT CLOUD spewing out of the Indian Point nuclear plant last month wasn't a smoke signal — it was radioactive steam.

For two days starting Nov. 2, an estimated 600,000 gallons of boiling, radioactive water escaped through a valve that was stuck open in the Unit 2 reactor of the nuclear power plant in Westchester.

The superheated water instantly turned to steam and spread out over the lower Hudson Valley in a cloud containing tritium, a cancer-causing radioactive isotope.

A spokesman for plant operator Entergy said the company wasn't concerned about the amount of radioactivity released into the atmosphere.

Officials: 'Insignificant' amounts released

"The steam was from a non-radioactive secondary system," said spokesman Jerry Nappi, "that contains slight amounts of tritium and is insignificant."

The accidental release, however, prompted an inspection from the regional office of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

According to NRC spokesman Neil Sheehan, the commission ordered a report from Entergy that is due within 60 days. The report will detail exactly what happened during the steam release.

"We will be documenting our own findings in an inspection report covering plant activities for the fourth quarter of 2009. It will be due out in late January," said Sheehan.

According to Kevin Mangan, a senior NRC inspector on site at Indian Point, the water was highly pressurized at 750 pounds per square inch before it jettisoned for about 42 hours.

It took two days for plant owner Entergy to realize the valve was leaking before the plant automatically shut down.

Although Entergy officials dismissed the seriousness of the incident, operations at the plant were abruptly halted for four days.

Meanwhile, on Wednesday, a test of several emergency sirens that warn of an accident at Indian Point performed poorly, according to the NRC.

There are 172 sirens within 10

miles of the Buchanan based plant, and 37 of them failed to respond to a radio signal.

The new \$30 million emergency siren system was installed last year to alert some 300,000 residents living within a 10 mile radius if the plant has an accident.

According to the NRC, in Wednesday's test, one out of every 16 sirens in Putnam County failed, rating the utility company's performance at 78%. The NRC requires a 90% average for emergency siren tests.

The last test for the Indian Point sirens was in October, when all the sirens scored perfectly.

Entergy has applied to the NRC for a new operating license that would keep its two reactors running for an additional 20 years.

Indian Point earns about \$1 million a day for Entergy.

New bill aims to make living wage the norm, not exception

BY FRANK LOMBARDI
DAILY NEWS CITY HALL BUREAU

EVEN IF A DEAL is struck today on developing the Kingsbridge Armory into a \$324-million shopping mall, the "living wage" dispute that threatened to derail it will continue to roil City Hall.

Under a bill introduced Wednesday in the City Council by Oliver Koppell (D-Bronx) and Annabel Palma (D-Bronx), developers and others who benefit from city subsidies for their property deals will have to pay a living wage for the ensuing jobs that are created.

The bill would accomplish by law what community activists and members of the Bronx Council delegation have been trying to impose — for the first time ever in the city — on

the Related Companies, the city-chosen developer of the long-vacant Bronx armory.

Backers of the new bill say its passage would avoid future fights like the Kingsbridge Armory battle by making a living wage a citywide mandate rather than targeting one developer as a test case.

A living wage is defined as \$10 an hour plus benefits or \$11.50 without benefits, as compared to the minimum wage of \$7.25.

Those pushing for a living wage, as part of a community benefits agreement with the developer, argued Related was getting "a sweetheart deal" from the city — including \$14 million in various tax breaks and exemptions, plus a bargain \$5 million purchase price for the city-owned armory.

Such taxpayer-funded largesse should be

conditioned on creating more than just marginal-income jobs in the state's poorest borough, according to Bronx officials.

But aides to Mayor Bloomberg and representatives of the Related Companies said a mandated living wage would kill the mall project because potential retail tenants would balk at paying salaries higher than regional competitors.

A possible resolution to the impasse was still being hammered out as of last night between the Bronx delegation and mayoral officials, with consultations with the developer.

Council members are on call for a possible special session today to vote on zoning and other land-use actions required for the project. The deadline for such approvals is Monday.

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AT A GLANCE

ATLANTIC CITY — Resorts Atlantic City, unable to make debt payments for more than a year, closed a deal yesterday to hand itself over to a newly formed company consisting of its main lenders, including Wells Fargo.

The ownership transfer follows Resorts' agreement to let its lenders have the casino if they cancel nearly \$381 million in debt.

The new company, RAC Atlantic City Holdings LLC, says it wants to sell Resorts Atlantic City, the first U.S. casino outside Nevada, as quickly as possible. But with financing still extremely tight and consumers, including gamblers, still holding onto their wallets, that may not happen soon.

BRONX — This is the last weekend to receive free H1N1 influenza vaccine at clinics, and the Health Department is lifting most of the remaining restrictions on eligibility, starting tomorrow.

This weekend, vaccine centers will admit any New Yorker who is at least 4 years old, including all healthy adults. Previously, free vaccines were only given to those in high risk groups. The priority groups include pregnant women, anyone between 6 months and 24 years old, and adults with chronic health conditions. Health care workers and those in close contact with infants are also on the priority list.

The Bronx vaccine center will be at Intermediate School 127 at 1560 Purdy St. in Castle Hill and will be open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. tomorrow and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday.

JEROME PARK — Six talented students from the Celia Cruz Bronx High School of Music will be going upstate to participate in the All-State concert series thanks to hard work and a little help from one local bank. Municipal Credit Union donated \$10,000 to fund a part of the students' trip to Rochester later this month for the concert series.

Celia Cruz High School of Music is on the Walton Educational Campus, located at 2780 Reservoir Ave.

"We are delighted to help these talented and deserving students," commented Kam Wong, MCU president/CEO.

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