



AEIC Power Generation Committee Holds Virtual Fall Outage Planning Meeting

AEIC's Power Generation Committee held a members-only virtual conference call and planning meeting on August 5 to discuss fall outage planning during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted many companies' spring outage seasons, with many companies either canceling or postponing outages until the fall. The committee used this virtual platform as an opportunity to share best practices for planning and executing plant outages.

Jim Heilbron, of Southern Company, Chair of the committee, kicked off the meeting with a traditional welcome and safety message for all attending.

Jim emphasized the importance of remaining well hydrated during the hot summer period and introduced information about the benefit of eating right as another way to increase hydration.

Following the safety briefing, a best practices sharing session was held featuring Steve Mills from Xcel Energy, Rick Colgan from Calpine, and Randy Mullinax from Southern Company providing presentations on the steps their companies have been taking to continue some plant outages during the COVID pandemic.

Topics discussed including the importance of engaging backup vendors to provide outage work. The three presentations also emphasized the importance of staggered schedules for work crews, outage planning challenges, steps companies have taken to use masks and maintain distance between employees, health care checks while entering and working in plants, and consistent health protocols adhered to by both the electric companies and the vendor suppliers assisting with the outages.

The two-hour meeting was capped off with a roundtable discussion among the 35 committee members attending the virtual meeting. Also discussed was the issue that a compounded COVID situation could be possible, with flu season coming in fall and winter and the hurricane season also started.

Jim Heilbron emphasized that virtual members-only committee meetings have become an excellent way for members to share processes and procedures, particularly while face-to-face meetings are not possible.

Skip Cofield, of Southern Company, Secretary to the Committee, announced that the committee was planning for two, two-hour virtual members-only meetings in October, followed later by a virtual meeting with one of the major suppliers to the power generation industry.