More Power for the Tennessee Valley

Will Watts Bar Nuclear Plant Unit 2 be helping to meet the growing demand for electricity before the end of 2012? That's a question TVA is exploring with its Detailed Scoping, Estimating & Planning process. "The DSEP study is a thorough review of the work required to complete Unit 2," says Masoud Bajestani, vice president of Watts Bar Nuclear Plant Unit 2. "It will determine the estimated costs and resources to do the work, as well as the probable time required."

Bajestani says the DSEP work is about 70 percent complete. As part of DSEP, some 140 systems are being surveyed to determine their material conditions. These surveys include walk-downs and field inspections. About 80 engineers and inspectors are examining equipment, drawings and records. "Another factor in determining the cost to complete the project is labor expenses," says Bajestani. "The projected wages and salaries for everyone needed for all phases of construction must be used in calculations to determine total costs."

If TVA decides to complete the plant, this is likely to be the last reactor licensed under the NCR's old system. The NCR now uses a modified process for new nuclear-plant licensing that results in a combined construction permit and operating license being issued together before plant construction begins.

Ruth Horton, senior National Environmental Policy Act specialist stated, "Our draft SEIS updates previously completed studies that assessed the environmental impacts of both units at Watts Bar. Minimal environmental impacts are expected with the construction and operation of Unit 2. And the increased demand for housing and schools should be offset by the increases in tax revenue and employment."

If the TVA Board gives a "thumbs up" in August, Watts Bar 2 could be helping TVA meet the growing demand for electricity before the end of 2012.