

Your Borough PLANT'S PLUGGED IN

BY ABBY LUBY

SPECIAL TO THE DAILY NEWS

BOTH NUCLEAR reactors at the Indian Point Nuclear Power plant were operational yesterday after several system failures forced their shutdown last week.

The Westchester plant was completely off the power grid for four days, prompting an investigation by federal officials.

Unit 3 was returned to service Monday after a nonradioactive water leak into a generator with electrical components last Friday brought on the shutdown.

"Water and electrical components don't mix," said Paul Cataldo, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission inspector at Indian Point.

Indian Point back after system failures

"They shut down the plant to prevent bad things from happening."

The cause of the leak is still unknown, said Jerry Nappi, spokesman for plant owner Entergy. "The leak was about 45 gallons per minute for two to three minutes."

But David Lochbaum, a nuclear safety engineer at the Union of Concerned Scientists, believes the leak was larger.

"A less severe leak allows time for operators to reduce the reactor power before shutting down. In this case, they had to do it immediately," said Lochbaum, who has worked at Indian Point.

The shutdown also stopped hot steam flowing to the 40-ton turbines that generate electricity.

Unit 2 shut down when water in the steam generator reached a dangerously high level.

Neil Sheehan, spokesman for the NRC, said the problem was with the feedwater system.

"Different issues can cause problems with feedwater systems, including valve and bearing failures, breakdowns and pump leaks," he said.

A malfunctioning feedwater system triggered the 1979 meltdown at Three Mile Island in Pennsylvania.

Indian Point has been forced to shut down six times in the last two years because of malfunctions in feedwater and pump systems in both reactors.

The repeated problems may affect plant performance ratings.

"The Indian Point 2 shutdown last Friday will count as a hit on the unit's performance indicator," said Sheehan. A bad rating means stepped up NRC inspections.

Nappi insisted the plant is very reliable. "Unit 3 has been running for 7,000 hours without shutting down and Unit 2 has generated electricity more than 99% of the time."

Entergy has applied for a new operating license to keep its reactors running until 2033 and 2035.

AT A GLANCE

LONGWOOD — City and borough officials turned out yesterday to celebrate the groundbreaking for a new affordable eight-story development for low-income families.

The 110-unit "green" building at 920 Westchester Ave. is being developed by MJM Construction Services LLC under Mayor Bloomberg's New Housing Marketplace Plan — an \$8.4 billion initiative to finance 165,000 units of affordable housing for half a million New Yorkers by 2014.

Under the mayor's plan, the city has helped create more than 33,400 units throughout the Bronx and more than 3,700 units in the local Community Board area, officials said.

The new building will also house ground-floor retail space and a community facility, as well as an underground parking garage.

LEHMAN COLLEGE — The Lehman Center for the Performing Arts is celebrating its 30th birthday on Saturday, kicking off with an already sold-out performance by salsa star Victor Manuelle.

The venue will also present headlining performances by chart-toppers Eddie Palmieri (Sept. 25), Oscar D'Leon (Nov. 20) and Jose Feliciano (Dec. 4) as part of its Anniversary Latino Series, which will run through the spring.

For the center's full schedule and ticket prices, call (718) 960-8833 or visit www.lehmancenter.org.

RIVERDALE — City Council Member Oliver Koppell is sponsoring a customer service outreach event, in conjunction with the Department of Environmental Protection, next Tuesday to discuss recent changes in water bills and answer questions.

The session will run from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at The Riverdale Y, 5625 Arlington Ave. at 256th St.

Attendees can get an update on automated meter reading, learn about the Water Debt Assistance Program and discuss their water bills one-on-one with a DEP customer service representative.

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Modern Spaces NYC President Eric Benaim (r.), artist/curator Jennifer Garcia and artist Chris Mendoza get together in a model condominium at 10-63 Jackson Ave. in Long Island City. Benaim and Garcia's partnership allows area artists to display work in unsold condos. Photo by Craig Warga/Daily News

Partnerships with LIC painters create real art houses

BY LEIGH REMIZOWSKI

DAILY NEWS WRITER

IT'S THE next big thing in art galleries — empty luxury condos.

A Long Island City real estate firm is playing matchmaker between prospective homebuyers and local artists seeking patrons.

Modern Spaces NYC is offering up its vacant condominiums as gallery space for artists — boosting their exposure while sprucing up the hard-to-sell apartments.

"The marriage of art and real estate couldn't be more right," said Eric Benaim, president of Modern Spaces.

The firm takes no commission from the artists and gives them full reign to decorate the model units as they see fit. Then, the art-filled condos are used as venues for open houses.

"Every time we have done this, the artist has sold pieces," Benaim said.

The paintings and etchings of Brooklyn artist Chris Mendoza are currently on display

in a \$1 million penthouse at Ten 63 Condominiums, a 41-unit complex on Jackson Ave.

"A lot of time in galleries, you get told what to do," Mendoza said. "But here I was free to put the art where I wanted it."

Even better, Modern Spaces is offering the person who ends up buying the three-bedroom penthouse a \$1,000 credit toward Mendoza's artwork.

"A lot of new buyers are changing their lifestyles by moving," Benaim said. "Maybe their oil painting of fruit won't work anymore."

At the Powerhouse Condominium on 51st Ave., Modern Spaces dons the walls of its sales office with photographs by former Long Island City resident Eric Laverty.

Laverty was commissioned by the building's developer to chronicle the transformation of the Long Island Rail Road power plant into a luxury apartment complex.

He took more than 17,000 photos, many of which have been purchased by residents of the building.

"It just made sense to show my photos there," Laverty said.

Recently, Modern Spaces also opened up an empty, unfinished unit on the first floor of Ten 63 Condominiums to the international artists cooperative, We-Are-Familia, for a so-called "popup" gallery.

The gallery moves between unoccupied spaces around the world for short, week-long exhibits. Modern Spaces offered the Jackson Ave. location for free.

"It gets more people in to see their space and it helps us because we don't use the traditional gallery," said Jennifer Garcia, a founder of We-Are-Familia.

Garcia recently was hired by Modern Spaces to recruit artists for the agency.

Benaim said working with local artists is his way of giving back to the people who he believes made Long Island City what it is today.

"Development usually follows the artists," he said. "These are the people who are bringing life to an area."