

Duke Power may build nuclear power plants

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The Duke Power Co. has announced it is planning to build two nuclear reactors designed by Westinghouse Nuclear Services.

The move, if finalized, would end a long hiatus in the domestic construction of nuclear power plants, the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette reported Thursday.

Duke officials say they selected the Pittsburgh-based Westinghouse Electric Co.'s newest reactor design, the AP1000, for possible construction in North and South Carolina service areas.

Although the Charlotte, N.C.-based, Duke has not yet placed an order nor signed a contract for the reactors, it told the Post-Gazette it is preparing an application to submit to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission within three years.

The newspaper said the application process alone can cost as much as \$30 million.

If the regulatory process stays on schedule and Duke agrees to proceed with the project, construction could begin by 2010, Westinghouse President and Chief Executive Officer Steve Tritch told the newspaper. Duke cited 2015 as a potential completion date.

Construction of the last new reactor in the United States was completed in 1996, and there have been no nuclear plants ordered since 1978.

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