

Fort Worth Star-Telegram

1991-05-07

Section: TEXAS

Edition: STATE AM

Page: 6

Nuclear plant to be back on line this month, TU Electric predicts

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Comanche Peak nuclear power plant officials say they believe they can repair a damaged steam turbine and have the facility back in operation before the end of the month. The plant has been closed since March after discovery of a water leak. The plant remained closed for a six-week planned maintenance shutdown and was to have started up again last week when a problem with the turbine that runs the generator was discovered.

Officials aren't sure why, but at some point two blades began cutting into the casing that holds the turbine, causing grooving on the surface and wearing of blades, TU Electric spokesman George Hedrick said.

Crews will remove the casing that holds the turbine blades, which are turned by steam, and enlarge it slightly to give the blades more clearance. They also will mill down the blades that were in contact with the casing, Hedrick said.

The plant should be back in operation by middle to late May, he said.