

Diablo Canyon's first lady

By: Wendy Thies

A trailblazing woman is taking the reigns at Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant.

When competent women take the reigns it should not be a surprise - we have plenty of men in jobs above their level of competency.

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41-year old Donna Jacobs began her career at a Kansas power plant as a test engineer, and in 2001, made history as the first woman in the United States to manage a nuclear power plant. Jacobs is making history once again, this time as Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant's first female vice-president.

"Diablo is very well respected, and that's one of the reasons why I even looked to move outside of Kansas," says Jacobs. "I had been at my previous plant for over 18 years, really enjoyed what I was doing but the respect that Diablo has in the industry is very high."

Jacobs responsibilities at Diablo Canyon include engineering projects, nuclear fuel, and information technology.

"This job has all of the engineering for the plant, so I'm really focused on making sure we have the equipment ready for all the operators," says Jacobs.

PG&E's quest to build a storage facility for used nuclear fuel met with some opposition from the local community, and now that it's been approved, as a mother of two young children, Jacobs understands the concerns but emphasizes all precautions will be taken.

"Our top priority is always the health and safety of the public," says Jacobs. "Safety is number one, and everything that we're doing to line up the dry cask storage facility is to make sure safety is built into that."

Diablo Canyon is currently running at 100%, and generates enough electricity for 2 million people in northern and central California.