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Insulator-shooting vandals cause damage to power lines

BPA offers up to \$1,000 for information

Crime Witness Program Bonneville Power Administration

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: TUESDAY, June 10, 1997

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MAUPIN, Ore. — The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is offering up to \$1,000 for any information leading to the arrest and conviction of vandals who damaged insulators along the Celilo-Sylmar 500,000-volt transmission line on May 28.

A BPA helicopter patrol reported gun shot damage to a portion of the Celilo-Sylmar power line three miles east of Maupin. While there was no disruption to electrical service, BPA maintenance line crews spent more than eight hours replacing insulators and repairing the damaged portion of the power line estimated at a cost of \$2,000.

“Anyone shooting at insulators for fun on power lines should consider the dangers and consequences,” explained BPA Security Specialist Gail Dreckman. “Under dryer conditions, downed power lines can cause fires and lethal ground voltages that can kill or seriously injure the vandals and others who may be in the area.”

BPA annually spends between \$400,000 and \$500,000 to replace insulators damaged or destroyed by gun shot vandalism. These costs, including the \$2,000 repair cost of this incident, get passed on to customers and ratepayers. Above and beyond these monetary costs and inconveniences are the possible disruption of essential services -- fire departments, police and ambulance services -- that are dependent on reliable electric service.

Under its popular neighborhood watch-style Crime Witness Program, BPA offers cash rewards up to \$1,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of perpetrators. Since 1994, the Crime Witness Program has generated hundreds of telephone tips resulting in dozens of arrests, recovered property, and most importantly, deterrence of future crime. Informants can call toll free 1-800-437-2744 and their identity will be kept confidential.

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