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Vandalism to power lines poses threat

BPA offers up to \$1,000 for information

**Crime Witness Program
Bonneville Power Administration**

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STAYTON, Ore. — The same sunny, warm weather that has been attracting people to the outdoors has, unfortunately, marked the beginning of the vandalism season. The Bonneville Power Administration is offering up to \$1,000 for information leading to arrest and conviction of the vandals that shot at a transmission tower east of the Marion substation in Stayton, causing approximately \$5,500 worth of damage.

On June 7, at 6:30 p.m., a BPA transmission line maintenance crew detected trouble on the Buckley-Marion 500,000-volt power line. A BPA helicopter patrol later confirmed that 17 insulators had been destroyed by gun shot on a transmission tower eighteen miles east of Stayton.

“Anyone shooting at insulators for fun on power lines should consider the dangers and consequences,” explained BPA Security Specialist Gail Dreckman. “High voltage electrical lines pose enormous risk to anyone who shoots at them. Downed power lines can cause fires and lethal ground voltages can kill or injure the vandals and others in the area.”

Fortunately, there was no disruption of electrical service to customers. BPA used alternative pathways to electrify power delivery while crews spent almost 15 hours repairing the line. Had this incident resulted in power interruption to BPA customers, costs would have been significantly higher.

BPA annually spends between \$400,000 and \$500,000 to replace insulators damaged or destroyed by gun shot vandalism. These costs, including the \$5,500 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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