



Bureau of Reclamation Joins BPA in Crime Witness Program

Bonneville Power Administration

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: WEDNESDAY, October 29, 1997

PR 45 97

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PORTLAND, Ore. – Two federal agencies have joined forces in a crime-fighting alliance designed to increase the reliability of the Northwest's electricity system. The Bonneville Power Administration's neighborhood watch-style crime prevention program expanded this month to include facilities owned by the Bureau of Reclamation.

"The alliance is a very natural fit. Both agencies see the alliance as the beginning of a region-wide federal initiative in community policing. The ultimate beneficiaries are the citizens of the region," said Mike Berg, manager of BPA's Crime Witness program.

We are joining BPA in this effort to combat crime and help to deter possible instances of vandalism at our facilities in the Pacific Northwest," said Mark Albl, the Bureau's regional security coordinator. "Both agencies are optimistic that this partnership will be successful and provide the right incentive to fight crime.

The Bureau manages 10 major dams and associated power plants located in the Pacific Northwest. Along with the responsibility of managing these facilities comes the task of keeping them secure from vandalism.

The facilities owned and operated by BPA and the Bureau are major components of the integrated Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS). Vandalism, theft or other criminal activity on BPA substations, transmission lines and microwave communication systems can directly affect Bureau projects. Similar crimes on Bureau projects can affect BPA's operations as well.

Any initiative that enhances the operational reliability, or reduces the operating costs of one partner in the FCRPS, benefits everyone else," Berg added. "It just makes good business sense for us to combine scarce security resources in a constructive and mutually beneficial manner.

BPA created its Crime Witness Program in 1994 to ask the public to help fight crime on its facilities including criminal acts that could potentially cause power outages. During its first three years, the program focused on BPA's transmission lines, substations, maintenance complexes and associated access roads and rights-of-way.

The Crime Witness Program offers cash rewards of up to \$1,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of persons committing crimes against BPA's transmission system, property or personnel. Since 1994, the program has generated hundreds of telephone tips resulting in dozens of arrests, thousands of dollars in recovered property and collected restitution and, most importantly, deterred of future crime. Informants can call toll free 1-800-437-2744 to anonymously report suspicious or criminal activity. With the addition of Bureau facilities, the Crime Witness Program will be renamed Pacific Northwest Federal Power System Crime Witness Program.

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