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***NEWS RELEASE:***  
***Power line vandals strike Marion line***  
***BPA offers up to \$1,000 for information***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
**MONDAY, April 13, 1998**  
PR 29 98

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**SALEM, Ore.** — The same sunny, spring 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 the arrest and conviction of vandals who caused as estimated \$3,200 worth of damage to a major transmission line southeast of Salem.

On March 29 at 2:30 p.m., a BPA transmission line maintenance crew was notified of trouble on the Buckley-Marion 500,000-volt power line in an area that has experienced repeated acts of vandalism over the past couple of years. A BPA helicopter patrol quickly surveyed the damage and confirmed that an entire string of insulators along a transmission tower had been destroyed by gun shot. There are no suspects, but the likely perpetrators are young adults who enjoy shooting insulators.

"Anyone shooting at power lines for fun should consider the dangers and consequences," explained BPA Security Specialist Gail Dreckman. "High voltage power 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 deliver power while crews spent more than five 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 gunshot vandalism. These costs 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 depend on reliable electric service.

The Crime Witness Program was created by BPA in 1994 as a cost-effective way to involve the public in combating crimes that could potentially cause power outages. Through its neighborhood watch-style 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, thousands of dollars of 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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