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## *Vandals cause electrical outage*

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**Bonneville Power Administration**  
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**PORTLAND, Ore.** – Vandals deliberately shot out insulators on a high-voltage transmission line that caused a one-hour power outage Nov. 8 in Cascade Locks, Ore., near the Columbia River Gorge.

"Fortunately no one was injured in this incident. High-voltage electrical lines constitute an inherent risk to anyone who is foolish enough to risk shooting at them from below," explained BPA Security Specialist Gail Dreckman. "Downed power lines can cause fires, and lethal ground voltages can kill or injure the vandals and others in the area."

Dreckman urges people who may have information about the crime to call BPA's Crime Witness Hot Line toll free at 1-800-437-2744. BPA offers cash awards up to \$1,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of perpetrators.

The direct costs of this incident alone could exceed \$4,000. BPA has spent as much as \$500,000 in a single year just to replace transmission line insulators and other hardware damaged and destroyed by gunshot vandalism. These costs get passed on to customers and ratepayers. Above and beyond these monetary costs and inconveniences to everyone is 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.

Since then, 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. For example, in 1999, a total of 202 insulator units were replaced, representing an 88 percent decrease from the 1,723 units replaced in an average year prior to the institution of the Crime Witness Program. Cumulative savings since the program began in 1994 now exceed \$2 million.

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