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## *Vandals cause \$6,000 damage to local transmission line*

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### **Bonneville Power Administration**

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**LONGVIEW, Wash.** – Vandals deliberately shot out insulators on a high-voltage transmission line near Longview recently, causing \$6,000 of damage. BPA is looking for information leading to the vandals' arrest.

The Longview-to-Allston 230,000-volt power line, located west of the city near Solo Mountain, was out of service for eight hours Wednesday while crews worked to repair the damage. Vandals destroyed nearly all of the 91 insulators. BPA will install new bulletproof insulators to replace the old ceramic ones because vandalism occurs so frequently in this area.

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

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.

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 department, police and ambulance services — that depend on reliable electric service.

BPA owns 15,000 circuit miles of high-voltage transmission line, about 75 percent of the Pacific Northwest's transmission capacity.

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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