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## ***Vandals shoot out power line insulators near North Bend***

### ***BPA offers up to \$1,000 for information***

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#### **Bonneville Power Administration**

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**North Bend, Wash.** — The Bonneville Power Administration is offering up to \$1,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of individuals who damaged a power line located about five miles east of North Bend, just off Highway 90. The damage to the insulators is estimated at \$10,000.

Vandals shot out insulators on BPA's Rocky Reach/Maple Valley 345,000-volt line on April 8 causing BPA to de-energize the line for ten hours so emergency maintenance crews could repair the damage.

While BPA's line crews were repairing the damage, many people were actively shooting in the area. Crews were at risk and asked the shooters to stop target practicing while they were working. The shooting subsided for a short time but resumed with little regard for the line crew's safety.

"An increase in this type of vandalism is expected when the weather turns warm and sunny. However, this is a particularly serious situation due to the very high voltages carried by this line and the number of people using the area for recreation," reported Jeffrey Millenor, security specialist for BPA. "If a high voltage power line falls to the ground, the resulting charge in the ground can cause electrocution of those in the area as far away as 100 feet."

Fortunately this case of vandalism did not result in a power outage because the transmission line maintenance crews discovered the damage before the line failed.

Vandalism accounts for millions of dollars in damage to the Northwest power system each year. 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 department, police and ambulance — that depend on reliable electric service.

Since 1994, BPA's Crime Witness Program has generated hundreds of tips resulting in dozens of arrests and thousands of dollars of recovered property and, most important, deterrence of future crime. In 1999, a total of 202 insulator units were replaced, representing an 88 percent decrease from the historic average of 1,723 units replaced each year prior to the institution of the program. Cumulative savings since the program began totals more than \$2,000,000. Informants can call toll free 1-800-437-2744. The identity of informants is kept strictly confidential.

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