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Bonneville Power Administration

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: THURSDAY, July 6, 2000

PR 64 00

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EUGENE, Ore. – The Bonneville Power Administration is offering up to \$1,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of vandals who destroyed equipment on a BPA high voltage transmission line.

On June 30, vandals destroyed several critical insulators on one of its 115,000-volt transmission lines near Finn Rock in Lane County, resulting in a loss of electrical service at Eugene Water & Electric Board's (EWEB's) Carmen-Smith and Blue River Substations and Carmen-Smith Dam and Cougar Dam.

The insulators were so badly shot up that the conductor was actually brought to the ground and caused a brush fire. Fortunately, the fire was quickly put out.

Electricity ratepayers will bear the \$5,000 cost of this incident if no one is apprehended.

"Anytime this kind of incident occurs, whether it causes a power outage or not, it is costly and dangerous," said Mike Berg, BPA security specialist. "Every one of these incidents has an impact on BPA's rates. That's why we really like to catch those responsible so they can pay for the damage instead of our ratepayers. Those responsible were not only playing with fire, they were playing with their lives and the lives of others."

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 total more than \$2,000,000. Informants can call toll free at 1-800-437-2744. The identity of informants is kept confidential.

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