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BPA increases reward to \$5,000 in Shelton vandalism case Third incident in one month

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Bonneville Power Administration

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CONTACTS: [Jeffrey Millenor](#) BPA (503) 230-3103

Shelton, Wash. — A third act of vandalism in one month on the same high voltage power line prompted the Bonneville Power Administration today to increase its reward to \$5,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the perpetrators.

No one lost electric service after perpetrator shot out insulators on BPA's 230,000-volt transmission line three miles north of Shelton. Damages for all three incidents will total \$10,000.

"We believe we're dealing with the same people on the three incidents," said Jeff Millenor, security specialist for BPA. "It's important that we catch these vandals before they do more damage to the power system."

Vandalism accounts for millions of dollars in damage to the Northwest power system each year. These costs get are passed on to customers and ratepayers. Above and beyond these monetary costs and inconveniences are theLosing electric service for some can be a life-or-death situation said Millenor. Outages can potentially cause possible disruption of essential services — fire departments, police and ambulance services — that depend on reliable electric servicelectricity. Shooting at power lines can be dangerous for people nearby too.

"This is a serious situation due to the high voltages carried by this line and the number of people using the area for recreation," said Millenor. "Electricity traveling in the ground from a downed line can electrocute people as far away as 100 feet or more."

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 before the institution of the program began. Cumulative savings since the program beganThe program has saved ratepayers totals more than \$2 million. Informants can call toll

free 1-800-437-2744. The identity of informants is kept strictly confidential.

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