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## *Vandals put power system at risk*

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### **Bonneville Power Administration**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: FRIDAY, Oct. 20, 2000**

PR 81 00

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**KALISPELL, Mont.** – Vandals shooting at a Bonneville Power Administration transmission line Oct. 5 seriously hampered the transmission system's ability to keep the lights on. Though no one was left without power, BPA is taking this incident seriously and is offering a reward of up to \$1,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible.

Insulators on BPA's 500,000-volt Dworshak-Taft line were damaged by gunfire at approximately 5:40 AM. The power line connects Dworshak Dam and the Taft Substation near Kalispell. Power transfers along the line were reduced from the normal 2,000 megawatts to as low as 1,290 megawatts. Even though no one suffered an electric outage, the reduction eroded the system's ability to handle bona fide emergencies, such as line or generator outages. The insulators were replaced and the line was restored at a cost of \$9,500.

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, 202 insulators were replaced representing an 88 percent decrease from the historic average of 1,723 units replaced each year before the program began. Ratepayers have saved more than \$2 million because of this program. Informants can call toll free 1-800-437-2744. The identity of informants is kept strictly confidential.

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