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EARTHQUAKE PREPAREDNESS PAYS!

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Bonneville Power Administration

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Olympia, Wash. – Last week's earthquake had very modest impacts on the Bonneville Power Administration's transmission system. Eleven BPA substations in the Puget Sound area sustained very minor damage such as broken insulators. The reason BPA fared so well is simple: preparation works.

"We've spent \$2.5 million since 1995 hardening facilities to prevent earthquake damage," BPA Vice President for Transmission Field Services Fred Johnson said. "It's worth every penny. For example, the quake rocked some of our big 500-kilovolt transformers hard enough to trip them off line just from the oil sloshing around inside. But, because they were strapped to their pads, we just reset them and they resumed operation. If just one had tipped over, it would have cost more than a million dollars in damage."

Puget Sound is BPA's top priority because it's the part of the Northwest considered most susceptible to earthquakes, said Leon Kempner, head of BPA's seismic hardening task force. "We've strapped down and anchored major equipment in all of BPA's 500-kV substations in the area," Kempner said.

"The program is obviously well worth it," Johnson said. "The fact that an earthquake of this magnitude caused so little damage can be significantly attributed to BPA's seismic program."

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For a downloadable color photograph of BPA's (immense) 500-kilovolt transformers at the agency's Covington Substation near Seattle, go to

<http://www.bpa.gov/Corporate/KC/mediacenter/covtrns.jpg>
