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## *Vandals destroy insulators BPA offers reward*

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### **Bonneville Power Administration**

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**Sedro Woolley, Wash.** – The Bonneville Power Administration is offering up to \$1,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of vandals who damaged a BPA high-voltage power line near Sedro Woolley, about 40 miles south of the Canadian border.

On May 2, vandals shot out several strings of insulators on a 500,000-volt transmission line. BPA took the line out of service for approximately 5 1/2 hours and replaced the insulators at a cost of approximately \$10,000.

In the state of Washington, vandalism that affects public utilities is a class B felony punishable by confinement in a state correctional institution for up to 10 years or by a fine not to exceed \$20,000, or both.

"This is a particularly serious situation due to the very high voltages carried by this line," explained 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."

Vandalism accounts for millions of dollars in damage to the Northwest power system each year. These costs get passed on to customers and ratepayers. Beyond these monetary costs and inconveniences is the possible disruption of essential services – fire, police and medical – that depend on reliable electric service.

Since 1994, BPA's Crime Witness program has generated hundreds of tips resulting in dozens of arrests, thousands of dollars of recovered property and, most important, deterrence of future crime. In 1999, BPA replaced 202 insulator units, an 88 percent decrease from the historic average of 1,723 units a year. Cumulative savings since the program began total 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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