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Vandals destroy insulators BPA offers reward

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Bonneville Power Administration

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OLYMPIA, 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 in Grays Harbor County near Olympia, Wash.

On June 24, BPA maintenance personnel investigated a power line that registered as disabled and found that vandals had shot out insulators on the 115,000-volt line. Crews replaced the damaged parts at an estimated cost of \$5,000 in an outage that lasted about nine hours.

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. Cumulative savings since the program began total 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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