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## ***BPA ups reward to \$5,000 to stop repeat vandalism***

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### **Bonneville Power Administration**

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**Ravensdale, Wash.** – The Bonneville Power Administration is cracking down on a wave of vandalism to BPA high-voltage power lines over the last few months near Ravensdale, in the Maple Valley area of south-central King County, Wash. BPA announced today that it will increase the reward it offers from \$1,000 to \$5,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of vandals in this area.

Since May, vandals have damaged several strings of insulators and towers on high-voltage power lines around the Raver Substation. BPA line maintenance personnel have repeatedly taken the power lines out of service to replace insulators at a cumulative cost of about \$40,000, according to BPA Security Specialist Mike Berg.

"This is one of our most critically important corridors, and it is an area where there are repeat incidents of trespassing, dumping and gunshot vandalism. Raver Substation has also been the target of a drive-by shooting earlier this year," Berg explained. "We really want to see the perpetrators convicted. They are becoming a threat to the integrity of the power system as to well as the safety of the surrounding community."

Among the hardest hit areas are the Raver Substation, which is approximately two miles northwest of Palmer and three miles southeast of Ravensdale: the corridors running in all directions out of the substation; and the transmission corridor near Kent Kangley Road and S.E. 327<sup>th</sup> Ave., near Ravensdale.

In the state of Washington, vandalism that affects public utilities is a class B felony punishable by imprisonment 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 these lines," 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 \$3,900,000. Informants can call toll free 1-800-437-2744. The identity of informants is kept strictly confidential.

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