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**BONNEVILLE POWER ADMINISTRATION
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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CONTACT: Doug Johnson 503-230-5840

Trespassers cost ratepayers money, threaten safety and reliability; reward offered

Covington, Wash. – An uptick in trespassing and illegal activity on the right-of-way below a Bonneville Power Administration high-voltage power line has led to BPA installing a fence and additional “No Trespassing” signs to protect the area from further damage. Northwest ratepayers will absorb the costs in electric rates, and BPA is offering a reward of up to \$25,000 for information that leads to the arrest and conviction of those responsible.

The repeated incidents occurred on a BPA right-of-way near Southeast 164th Place and 168th Avenue Southeast in Covington, Wash. Trespassers have cut down trees, built fires and used all-terrain vehicles on the property. These activities jeopardize the safety of trespassers, BPA personnel and power customers in the area.

Cutting down trees near transmission equipment can cause them to fall on power lines, creating the possibility of widespread outages and immediate danger to people near the lines. Fires can create heavy smoke that can cause power to arc from the line to the ground, threatening to take the line out of service and creating the potential for serious injury or even death for anyone near the line. All-terrain vehicle use can damage access roads, which in turn jeopardizes the safety of BPA linemen who perform routine and emergency maintenance on the high-voltage lines.

“These trespassers are endangering their lives and the safety of our employees,” said Kevin West, BPA physical security specialist. “The culprits are not only damaging the electrical infrastructure that keeps our lights on, but they’re also forcing electric ratepayers to cover the costs of this kind of senseless damage and activity.”

The illegal activity occurring on the right-of-way not only has an impact on BPA crews and ratepayers, it also impacts landowners with property adjacent to the right-of-way. The physical and other measures BPA has taken are designed to benefit both BPA and our neighbors.

Through its Crime Witness Program, BPA offers up to \$25,000 for information that leads to the arrest and conviction of individuals committing crimes against BPA facilities and

infrastructure. Anyone having information is asked to call BPA's confidential and toll-free Crime Witness hotline at 800-437-2744. If you see activity such as those mentioned above, residents and others are encouraged to call 911 to help local law enforcement catch perpetrators in the act.

In 2010, BPA made two \$300 awards to individuals who provided tips on thefts BPA experienced in southwest Washington. Since 2006, BPA has paid 12 rewards totaling almost \$14,000.

“We’re hoping that this information will help jog the memory of someone who may know about this activity,” West said. “Sometimes even small details can help law enforcement officials make significant investigative progress.”

For more on BPA’s Crime Witness Program, go to <http://www.bpa.gov/corporate/contact/crimewitness/index.cfm>

BPA is a not-for-profit federal agency that markets renewable hydropower from federal Columbia River dams, operates three-quarters of high-voltage transmission lines in the Northwest and funds one of the largest wildlife protection and restoration programs in the world. BPA and its partners have also saved enough electricity through energy efficiency projects to power four large American cities.

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