

BPA NEWS

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BONNEVILLE POWER ADMINISTRATION
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BPA focuses on safety and reliability during total eclipse *Public's cooperation requested in interacting with crews on or near transmission lines and facilities*

Portland, Ore. – While the pending total eclipse may capture the nation's attention and turn eyes skyward, Bonneville Power Administration remains focused on the region's high-voltage transmission lines directly overhead.

Between Aug. 16 and Aug. 23, officials from the state of Oregon expect an influx of more than one million visitors, many of whom may be camping in areas near BPA facilities and critical infrastructure. Likewise, the state of Idaho anticipates significant travel in and out of the state. BPA is keenly aware that its high-voltage corridors may appear an attractive vantage point for the public even as the lines may pose potential hazards.

These pop-up populations may put additional strain on BPA as it seeks to deliver power reliably and safely throughout the Northwest. BPA's Security and Continuity of Operations Office has been analyzing the path and timing of the eclipse relative to BPA facilities and interests, and working both within BPA and with external agencies to identify and mitigate those potential impacts to our operations.

"We're expecting significant traffic congestion, which could create challenges in responding to any potential power outages. We're also concerned about the possibility of trespassing and vandalism on BPA property, as well as an elevated risk for wildfires," says Sarah Laylo, chief security and continuity officer for BPA.

One concern for the agency is the interaction between the public and our transmission field crews who may be responding to a power outage or performing needed maintenance on the high-voltage transmission system.

"If you encounter a BPA field crew in or near a BPA right-of-way or facility, please remember they have a job to do and that job is directly tied to providing reliable power to the people of the Northwest," said Robin Furrer, vice president of Transmission Services for BPA. "And if they give you instructions or request that you leave an area, it is for your safety. High voltage cannot be taken lightly."

As a way of introduction to visitors and a reminder to residents of the northwest, BPA operates three-



fourths of the region's high-voltage transmission system. That system includes more than 15,000 circuit miles of lines that move vast amounts of power from hydroelectric projects and other power plants to urban centers hundreds of miles away.

Here are some key safety facts to remember with power lines or substations:

- BPA's high-voltage transmission lines range from 69,000 volts to 500,000 volts – that's 50 to 100 times the amount of electricity that flows through the distribution lines delivering power to your home;
- Unlike the wiring in your home, overhead power lines are not enclosed by electrical insulating material;
- Electricity can "arc" or "flashover" from wires, through the air, to trees, other vegetation or equipment up to 15 feet away, where it can cause fires, injuries or even fatalities to anyone nearby;
- When power lines carry more electric load, they normally heat up, which causes the wire to expand and sag. In summer, for example, when the air is hot and customers demand lots of electricity, lines can sag up to 14 feet;
- Under some high-voltage lines, vehicles can collect induced voltage, particularly if on a nonconductive surface such as asphalt or dry rock. BPA crews use specific restrictions for parking and roads within the right-of-way to keep potential shocks at a low level.

Additionally, wildfires are an ever-present danger, particularly during a dry, hot summer. While BPA's right of ways are used on occasion as fire breaks by firefighters, they are not immune to fire. Something as simple as the heat from an idling vehicle's exhaust pipe can result in combustion of grasses or low vegetation.

BPA is asking the public to report any suspicious activity in the vicinity of the high-voltage transmission system. Damage to lines or substations or other related facilities and equipment is a crime. BPA incurs direct costs to replace stolen or damaged equipment. But those costs, along with lost revenues and economic losses due to power interruptions, are ultimately passed on to electric ratepayers in the Northwest.

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. If you have information about illegal or suspicious activity on BPA property, please call BPA's 24-hour, toll-free, confidential Crime Witness hotline at 800-437-2744. If you see illegal or suspicious activity happening in real time, please first contact local law enforcement. For more details about the program, go to www.bpa.gov/goto/CrimeWitness.

About BPA

The Bonneville Power Administration, headquartered in Portland, Ore., is a nonprofit federal power marketer that sells wholesale electricity from 31 federal dams and one nuclear plant to 142 Northwest electric utilities, serving millions of consumers and businesses in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, western Montana and parts of California, Nevada, Utah and Wyoming. BPA delivers power via more than 15,000 circuit miles of lines and 260 substations to 511 transmission customers. In all, BPA markets about a third of the electricity consumed in the Northwest and operates three-quarters of the region's high-voltage transmission grid. BPA also funds one of the largest fish and wildlife programs in the world, and, with its partners, pursues cost-effective energy savings and operational solutions that help maintain affordable, reliable and carbon-free electric power for the Northwest. www.bpa.gov