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Rebuild starts for old western Washington transmission line

PORTLAND, Ore. - One of the Bonneville Power Administration's oldest transmission lines will be rebuilt this summer. Construction on the 18-mile-long line between the Washington cities of Raymond and Cosmopolis begins June 15 and will be completed by November 2004.

"This project will improve reliability and address safety concerns," said project manager Gary Beck. "In the past 10 years, there have been 113 outages along this line requiring maintenance. Trees were responsible for damage in 91 of those incidents."

Beck says another reason for the project is that electrical loads in the region are expected to increase, especially during summers. "Right now, higher loads could exceed the capacity of this old line at times, meaning we might see more outages," Beck said. "We're committed to providing reliable power in the Northwest and rebuilding this old line helps ensure we meet that goal."

The 115-kilovolt line was built in the 1930s, acquired by BPA in the 1940s and upgraded in 1952. Today, Beck says, the line is old, physically worn and structurally unsound in some places. The existing structures and conductors show impact damage from falling trees; erosion and unstable soils have undermined the structure bases in some areas, and a number of the towers are leaning.

Most of the work will happen within BPA's existing right-of-way, roughly parallel with highway 101 through Pacific and Grays Harbor counties on Washington's Olympic Peninsula. All of the old steel towers will be replaced with more modern tubular

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steel single-pole towers and all conductors will be replaced. In some cases, tower locations will be shifted to avoid wetlands. Beck says there may be times when traffic on highway 101 near the construction zones will be affected.

Two years ago BPA removed dangerous trees from the edges of the line's right-of-way, reducing some of the maintenance requirements. Beck says, "Now it's time to complete the job and bring western Washington residents more reliable service."

The project is estimated to cost \$12.3 million. Information on the project can be obtained at BPA's transmission Web site
http://www.transmission.bpa.gov/PlanProj/Transmission_Projects/

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