

BPA NEWS

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BONNEVILLE POWER ADMINISTRATION
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Northwest electric customers save millions with state-of-the-art recycling program

Vancouver, Wash. — The Bonneville Power Administration’s innovative approach to recycling saved Northwest electric ratepayers nearly \$3 million in 2018, with more savings projected for 2019. The agency’s sustainability efforts – from recycling transmission conductor and tower parts to auctioning off used equipment – are winning national sustainability awards.

One of BPA’s innovative approaches to recycling is its use of a machine known as the linear chopper. The device’s technology uses magnets to separate the aluminum and steel components of used high-voltage conductor wire – something BPA has a lot of. The agency owns 15,000 miles of transmission line across the west.

Once the used line is fed into the chopper, bits of steel and aluminum are separated and spewed out on opposite sides of the machine. The metal is then sent to regional smelters where it can fetch a healthy price. Since March of 2018, the machine has recovered more than 375 tons of aluminum valued at \$700,000. That’s a lot of aluminum when you consider the Statue of Liberty weighs 225 tons.

“Our sustainability efforts go hand-in-hand with our commitment to being responsible stewards of the environment and accountability to our ratepayers,” says Robin Furrer, BPA’s chief administrative officer. “We recover approximately 90% of our used materials, so we throw away very little.”

Aside from the chopper, the agency’s other recycling efforts include auctioning off used equipment, recycling components from computers and electronic waste and donating used furniture.



In 2018, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency honored BPA with the Federal Green Challenge Materials Management Award. The EPA is honoring BPA again in 2019 for its outstanding sustainability efforts and care for the environment.

Video of the linear chopper is available upon request.

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About BPA

The Bonneville Power Administration, headquartered in Portland, Oregon, is a nonprofit federal power marketer that sells wholesale, carbon-free hydropower from 31 federal dams in the Columbia River Basin. It also markets the output of the region's only nuclear plant. BPA delivers this power to more than 140 Northwest electric utilities, serving millions of consumers and businesses in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, western Montana and parts of California, Nevada, Utah and Wyoming. BPA also owns and operates more than 15,000 circuit miles of high-voltage power lines and 262 substations, and provides transmission service to more than 500 customers. In all, BPA provides nearly a third of the power generated in the Northwest. To mitigate the impacts of the federal dams, BPA implements a fish and wildlife program that includes working with its partners to make the federal dams safer for fish passage. It also pursues cost-effective energy savings and operational solutions that help maintain safe, affordable, reliable electric power for the Northwest. www.bpa.gov

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