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**A Fortis Company**

Immediate Release: **Friday, March 18, 2005**  
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### **BEL Identifies Sabotage as the Cause of Yesterday's National Power Outage**

Belize Electricity Limited (BEL) has identified sabotage as the cause of last night's national power outage which lasted for approximately one and a half hours.

The country-wide outage occurred at 8:35 pm. A crew of linemen was immediately dispatched to try to identify the location of the fault and its cause. While power was restored to the entire system by 10:15 pm, investigations continued into the night.

During those investigations, the crew discovered a wire thrown over the high voltage line between Maskall Village and Orange Walk Town along the Old Northern Highway. This act of vandalism caused the 115 kV line to trip, cutting off the supply of power from Mexico and overloading local supply sources.

The area on the Old Northern Highway has been isolated from the grid and the problem should be rectified before noon today. In the meantime, the northern districts are being supplied with power from Mexico and the rest of the country with power from the Mollejon Hydroelectric Facility and the Gas Turbine Unit. Customers in the northern districts are advised that there will be a short interruption in power supply shortly, as the Company restores the Mexican supply to the entire National Grid.

BEL has obtained the services of the BDF to patrol the transmission lines in an effort to prevent further acts of sabotage. The Company regrets any inconvenience that was caused by this outage and encourages concerned persons to call in reports of sabotage to

BEL's system by contacting the nearest Police Station or telephone BEL's toll free number at 0-800-BEL-CARE or 0-800-235-2273. A reward will be offered to any person who makes a report on the perpetrators of these acts, which leads to an arrest and conviction. BEL reminds the public that these acts are extremely dangerous and can result in serious injury or death.

**END**