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**A Fortis Company**

Immediate Release: **Tuesday, May 3, 2005**  
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**BDF Alerts BEL to Latest Act of Sabotage in the Orange Walk District – Reward for Report Leading to Conviction Increased to \$5,000**

Belize Electricity Limited's (BEL) transmission system suffered another act of sabotage over the weekend, which continues to negatively impact the Company's efforts to supply customers with reliable power.

At about 4:30 pm on Saturday, BDF personnel who were conducting air patrols over an area near San Jose Village in the Orange Walk District, noticed transmission poles on fire and immediately alerted BEL. Linemen crews were deployed to the area and discovered that six (6) of the 115KV transmission poles that supply power from Comisión Federal de Electricidad (CFE) in Mexico had been cut and burnt. The poles were also leaning and in danger of falling.

In an effort to stabilize the poles, the work crews put temporary support in place, which averted a countrywide power outage. On Monday, however, a national emergency with Mexico's electrical system, forced CFE to severely curtail power supply to BEL. Consequently, BEL had to utilize power from the Mollejon hydroelectric plant as a substitute, depleting the water supply. While power from CFE has since been restored, BEL can now only source energy from Mollejon during peak hours, as water storage at that facility is limited.

In order to carry out permanent repairs to damaged poles before the hurricane season, BEL advises the public that it will soon commence its schedule of rotating power outages across the country.

Since January, 20 transmission line poles have been damaged in acts of sabotage. BEL encourages the public to report these criminal acts by calling the Company's toll free number at 0-800-BEL-CARE or 0-800-235-2273 or contacting the nearest Police Station. A reward of \$5,000 will be offered to any person who makes a report on the perpetrators of these acts, which leads to an arrest and conviction.

BEL appreciates the efforts of the BDF soldiers who, in an effort to prevent further acts of sabotage, continue to patrol the Company's transmission lines.

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