



## *Eastside*

### **Copper-wire thefts decrease at PSE**

Puget Sound Energy, which provides electrical power to much of the Eastside, says steps it has taken to reduce the **theft** of **copper** wire from its substations have paid off, cutting thefts by 28 percent since January. The new measures also led to increased arrests in nine counties, the utility announced.

**PSE** estimates its **copper**-wire losses since 2005 at \$500,000. To combat **theft**, the company has replaced chain-link fencing around substations with extruded steel fencing — a type that cannot be easily cut — and has applied microscopic labels to **copper** wire to allow identification at recycling centers and by law enforcement.

Thefts of **copper** wire and other metals have risen dramatically in recent years, with the thefts often being committed by drug users to pay for methamphetamine use. The price of **copper** has risen from 80 cents a pound in 2003 to about \$3.50 a pound now, with national losses estimated at \$1 billion annually by the federal Department of Energy.