

NB Power

NB Power implements new technology to deter copper theft (07/07/10)

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FREDERICTON (CNB) - NB Power announced today that it has implemented DataDot technology to deter copper theft.

"DataDot, as known in the industry, is effectively like DNA for property," said Duff Boyd, director of Health, Safety and Security for NB Power. "This proven technology has been used in North America and Brazil, and has been successful in the recovery of stolen goods, such as computers, car parts, etc., and it has led to countless arrests. This technology is being used by more and more utilities such as BC Hydro, Hydro One and Nova Scotia Power. With DataDot there will be no mistake as to where the copper came from."

DataDot technology can be customized to enable the use of a distinct identification mark, such as a logo or unique number, which is then applied directly to the copper. While thousands of dots are applied, only one dot is needed for the police to identify that NB Power is the rightful owner of the copper.

"DataDot is another tool that we are implementing. However, our ultimate goal is to seek the assistance of the public to stop copper theft before it happens. There are serious ramifications from this criminal activity," Boyd said. "First and foremost, we are concerned with the safety of our workers, first responders and the public. When a site is compromised, safety measures are impacted. Last year in Canada there was one death due to copper theft, in British Columbia. In the United States, there were 14 fatalities, one of which was a police officer responding to a break-in.

"Over and above safety, the cost to replace copper is only a small part of the equation. In actuality, it can cost tens of thousands of dollars to repair the damage done to a site. This does not include the cost of lost power or the impact that this can have on essential services like 911 or in-home critical care."

The seriousness of these crimes is being recognized by the courts. On July 3, one man was sentenced to a five-year prison term for his role in stealing copper from NB Power.

NB Power has teamed up with Crime Stoppers and asks the public to report any suspicious behaviour.

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