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Gulf of Mexico OCS Region

News Release

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Central Gulf of Mexico Sale 185 Nets \$297,598,165 in High Bids

The U. S Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) announced today the completion of the two-phase bid evaluation process for Lease Sale 185. The sale was held on March 19, 2003.

Of the 561 tracts receiving bids, MMS rejected 16 high bids totaling \$17,933,064 as insufficient for fair market value. MMS accepted the high bids on 545 tracts for a net amount of \$297,598,165.

The highest bid accepted on a tract was \$8,216,885 by Hunt Petroleum (AEC) Inc.-Cheyenne International Corp., and Energy Partners, Ltd. for South Marsh Island, South Addition Block 109. This top bid of the sale was in 0-199 m water depth and received 3 bids. The second and third highest bids accepted were for \$7,350,000 and \$7,076,000 by Union Oil Company of California, Kerr-McGee Oil & Gas Corporation, and Ocean Energy, Inc. on Green Canyon Blocks 320 and 364 in 800-1,599 m water depth.

This sale indicates the continued strong showing of both major and independent oil and gas companies participating in the Gulf.

The top five companies participating in the highest number of accepted high bids for Sale 185 are:

	Company	Tracts	Sum of Accepted High Bids
1.	Kerr-McGee Oil & Gas Corporation	63	\$28,195,761
2.	Newfield Exploration Company	49	\$11,763,470
3.	BHP Billiton Petroleum (Deepwater) Inc.	49	\$ 9,605,538
4.	Chevron U.S.A. Inc.	38	\$ 9,321,717
5.	Magnum Hunter Production, Inc.	38	\$ 7,701,448

The top five companies with the highest total bonus accepted are:

	Company	Tracts	Sum of Accepted High Bids
1.	Kerr-McGee Oil & Gas Corporation	63	\$28,195,761
2.	Murphy Exploration & Production Co.	35	\$21,540,463
3.	Union Oil Company of California	27	\$18,709,956
4.	Dominion Exploration & Production	12	\$14,310,657
5.	Newfield Exploration Company	49	\$11,763,470

MMS is the Federal agency in the U.S. Department of the Interior that manages the nation's oil, natural gas, and other mineral resources on the Outer Continental Shelf in Federal offshore waters. The agency also collects, accounts for, and disburses mineral revenues from Federal and American Indian leases. These revenues totaled over \$6 billion in 2002 and nearly \$127 billion since the agency was created in 1982. Annually, nearly \$1 billion from those revenues go into the Land and Water Conservation Fund for the acquisition and development of state and Federal park and recreation lands.