



## NEWS RELEASE

U.S. Department of the Interior  
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### **Chris Oynes Named Associate Director of the MMS Offshore Program**

*Brings 30 Plus Years of Federal Energy Experience*

WASHINGTON – Minerals Management Service (MMS) Director Johnnie Burton today announced the selection of Chris Oynes as the new associate director of the agency's Offshore Minerals Management Program. Mr. Oynes has served as regional director of MMS's Gulf of Mexico Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Region for the past 13 years.

"Chris Oynes brings to the position of associate director a wealth of knowledge and experience about the practices and processes of the Offshore Program as well as impressive leadership skills," said Burton. "His work has helped to make the OCS a major contributor to the Nation's energy and economic security," she continued, "and his solid leadership was crucial to MMS Gulf of Mexico Region employees as well as Gulf OCS energy operators before, during and after the devastating hurricane seasons of 2004 and 2005."

As Associate Director of the Offshore Minerals Program, Mr. Oynes will be responsible for managing the MMS Offshore program to help meet the Nation's energy needs and protect the ocean and coastal environment.

As the Gulf of Mexico Regional Director, Mr. Oynes managed the leasing of OCS lands off five Gulf Coast states for oil, gas, and other mineral development, and supervised the regulation of operations and protection of the environment on those leases, which involve more than 4,000 platforms. He managed a staff of 550, comprised of geologists, geophysicists, petroleum engineers, biologists and environmental scientists.

Mr. Oynes has more than 30 years of Federal Government experience with energy matters, including 11 years in Washington, D.C. with MMS in various capacities, most notably as Chief of the Lease Sale Planning Branch and the Leasing Division. He served for seven years as the deputy regional director in the Gulf of Mexico before being named the regional director in 1995.

He has received the two highest honor awards that the U.S. Department of the Interior bestows, the Distinguished Service Award and the Meritorious Service Award.

Mr. Oynes holds a BA in Political Science from California State University at Fullerton and a Juris Doctor Degree from George Washington University.