



**U.S. Department of the Interior
Minerals Management Service
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region**

FOR RELEASE:

August 22, 2000

Barney Congdon
(504) 736-2595

Caryl Fagot
(504) 736-2590

Debra Winbush
(504) 736-2597

NEWS DESK ALERT

Western Gulf of Mexico Lease Sale 177 Receives 266 Bids on 226 Tracts

The U. S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service announced at 10 a.m. today that it has received 266 bids on 226 tracts offered in the Western Gulf of Mexico Lease Sale 177. Last year's Sale 174, held on August 25, 1999, and received 177 bids on 153 tracts.

Lease Sale 177 will take place tomorrow, August 23, 2000, at 9 a.m. at the Royal Sonesta Hotel (North and South Ballrooms), 300 Bourbon Street, New Orleans, Louisiana. MMS Director Walt Rosenbusch will be available for interviews at the sale.

NOTE: The Offshore Oil Scouts Association will be broadcasting Sale 177 on August 23, 2000, beginning at 9:00 a.m. by way of the Internet. The company they will be using is Vcall. You can visit their website at <http://www.vcall.com>. All you do is go their website on the morning of the sale and choose the sale from the list called "Today's Calls" and start listening. There are no plans for a radio broadcast at this time.

MMS is the Federal agency that manages the Nation's natural gas, oil and other mineral resources on the OCS, and collects, accounts for and disburses about \$4 billion yearly in revenues from offshore Federal mineral leases and from onshore mineral leases on Federal and Indian lands.