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**NEWS DESK ALERT**

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**Eastern Gulf of Mexico Lease Sale 189 Receives 16 Bids on 14 Tracts**

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) Gulf of Mexico Outer Continental Shelf Region (GOMR) announced at 10 a.m. today that it has received 16 bids on 14 tracts from four companies in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico Lease Sale 189. The lease sale will take place tomorrow, December 10, 2003, at 9 a.m. at the Royal Sonesta Hotel (300 Bourbon Street), in New Orleans, Louisiana.

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 land.