

The NewsRoom

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President's 2005 Budget Request Invests in Gulf of Mexico:

MMS Director Briefs New Orleans Business Leaders

(**Note to Editors:** MMS Director Burton will be available to take press calls on the afternoon of February 3, from the MMS offices in New Orleans. Please call in advance to schedule a time.)

President Bush's Fiscal Year 2005 budget request for the Minerals Management Service includes key investments for the agency's Gulf coast operations headquartered in New Orleans.

Minerals Management Service Director Johnnie Burton and local business leaders held a press briefing Tues., Feb. 3, 2004, to discuss these key Gulf Coast issues and their potential impacts on the oil and gas industry.

According to Burton, the budget request is a strong indicator of the commitment to sustain the multi-million dollar operation in the Gulf coast region for the foreseeable future. Oil and gas from the Outer Continental Shelf, particularly from the Gulf of Mexico, continues to play a key role in providing the Nation with reliable sources of energy.

The MMS Director discussed President Bush's proposed fiscal year 2005 funding levels for MMS offices in the region, Gulf of Mexico research, and new technology that will help the Nation meet its energy needs. The \$282.4 million budget request for MMS is a \$12 million increase over the fiscal year 2004 enacted budget of \$270.5 million. According to Burton, a funding increase of \$1.9 million will support digital geologic interpretive tools including a 3-D visualization room in the agency's New Orleans office, well log digitizing resources, and software training. The new technology is aimed at ensuring that MMS maintains technological parity with the private sector. This capability allows MMS to better perform resource evaluations for fair value determinations, resource conservation, and hazards assessments.

Burton was joined at the press conference by local officials and business leaders from the Greater New Orleans, Inc. Oil and Gas Cluster. The event was hosted by Jefferson Parish and held in the Jefferson Parish Eastbank Council chambers.

MMS Gulf of Mexico Regional Director Chris Oynes noted the local MMS office remains a strong employer with more than 600 positions. "Last year we filled 30 new full time positions and many of these employees were from Louisiana. We expect to do that again in 2004." MMS's Louisiana operations account for about \$80 million a year.

The Minerals Management Service 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 lands. MMS disbursed more than \$135 billion since the agency was created in 1982. Nearly \$1 billion from those revenues go into the Land and Water Conservation Fund annually for the acquisition and development of state and Federal park and recreation lands.

Relevant Web Sites

[MMS Main Website](#)

[Gulf of Mexico Website](#)

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