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Media Advisory

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Secretary Kempthorne to Open Western Gulf of Mexico Oil and Gas Lease Sale This Wednesday

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne will officially open the Minerals Management Service’s Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) oil and gas Lease Sale 207 for the Western Gulf of Mexico at 9 a.m. CDT, Wednesday, August 20, 2008 in New Orleans, Louisiana. Secretary Kempthorne will open and read the first bid.

At the conclusion of the sale, at approximately 11 a.m., Secretary Kempthorne will host a press conference to announce the final bid total as well as the significance of this sale to the nation’s current energy discussion.

- Who:** Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne
C. Stephen Allred, Assistant Secretary, Land and Minerals Management
Randall Luthi, Director, Minerals Management Service
- What:** Secretary Kempthorne opening and closing of the Western Gulf of Mexico Lease Sale 207
- When:** August 20, 2008: 9 a.m. CDT for opening remarks and first bid reading;
Approximately 11 a.m. CDT for press conference.
- Where:** Royal Sonesta Hotel New Orleans: Regal Suite (1st Floor), 300 Bourbon St.
New Orleans, La.
- Media:** Media representatives unable to attend the Lease Sale in New Orleans may participate in the press conference at 1-800-857-9037. The passcode is: 5856280.

Background Information:

Lease Sale 207 includes 18 million acres in the Western Gulf of Mexico. Historically the Western Gulf lease sales are not as active in bidding as Central Gulf sales but it should be noted:

- This is the first sale since President Bush lifted the executive ban on OCS leasing. The national focus has shifted to the potential of increased offshore energy production, which will continue to be under a strict regulatory regime of safety and environmental safeguards.
- The Sale is an excellent backdrop to better inform the current discussion about energy production in the United States. Sales such as this are the first step in what is normally a lengthy process to explore and develop offshore oil and gas resources.
- But even after a company invests up to a billion dollars or more in a lease during pre-production activities and spends several years engaged in multiple inspections, reviews, and strict government oversight, there's a very real possibility that no amount of oil or natural gas will be found or produced.
- Secretary Kempthorne earlier this month announced the initial steps of a new Five-Year Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program that could provide a significant advantage for the next administration, offering options two years earlier than the current Five Year Program.

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