



NEWS RELEASE

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Central Gulf of Mexico Lease Sale Receives 707 Bids on 405 Tracts

NEW ORLEANS – The U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) Gulf of Mexico Region announced today that it has received 707 bids from 77 companies on 405 tracts offered in the Central Gulf of Mexico Lease Sale 198.

“The number of bids on these tracts is certainly an indication of just how important the Gulf of Mexico is in providing energy for the United States,” said Burton. “We are proud to be back in New Orleans and to be a part of the city’s rebirth.”

Lease Sale 198 will take place tomorrow, March 15, 2006 at 9:00 AM at the Hilton New Orleans Riverside, Two Poydras Street, Napoleon Ballroom in downtown New Orleans, Louisiana. Director Johnnie Burton will open the sale, and she will be available after the sale to discuss the results of the sale.

This sale will be WebCast through the Offshore Oil Scouts Association at www.oosa.com. Real Player will need to be installed in order to run the WebCast. Webcasts of the lease sale does not imply any endorsement by MMS.

MMS Main Website: www.mms.gov
Gulf of Mexico Website: www.gomr.mms.gov

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