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BILLINGS – Bonus bids totaled \$600,000 at the Bureau of Land Management’s July 25 bi-monthly oil and gas lease sale in Billings.

Hannon and Associates, Inc., of Denver, bid \$118,560 for leasing rights on a 623-acre parcel in Divide County, N. D. That was the highest bid in the sale.

Of the 65 parcels offered, 45 were in Montana and 20 were in North Dakota; of those, 31 in Montana and 17 in North Dakota received bids.

Receipts from federal oil and gas leases are shared with the state or county where the lands are located. All leases are issued for a 10-year term.

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Oil and gas, pg. 2.

Competitive oil and gas lease sales are generally conducted every other month at BLM's Montana State Office. Additional information regarding competitive sale lists, detailed results of sales, or the leasing process is available by writing the Bureau of Land Management, 5001 Southgate Dr., Billings, Mont., 59101, by calling (406) 896-5004, or at www.mt.blm.gov/oilgas/leasing/index.html.

Less than one percent of the BLM-managed acreage nationally is disturbed by oil and gas activity. To minimize impacts (the "footprint") on the land, the Forest Service and BLM analyze the potential environmental effects from exploration and development before offering any leases for sale. All leases come with conditions on oil and gas activities to protect the environment that can include limits on when drilling can occur or restrictions on surface occupancy. Once an operator proposes exploration or development on a BLM-issued lease, the further environmental analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act is conducted to determine the site-specific need for various types of impact-limiting or mitigation measures. In addition, many operators routinely use Best Management Practices such as remote sensing to minimize surface impacts during production monitoring.

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