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BILLINGS – Bonus bids topped \$2.4 million at the Bureau of Land Management’s October 4 bi-monthly oil and gas lease sale in Billings. That amount was a fourfold increase over the last sale held at the end of July.

Access Resources of Denver bid \$483,340 for leasing rights on a 2,200-acre Forest Service parcel in McKenzie County, N. D. That was the highest bid in the sale.

Of the 78 parcels offered, 48 were in Montana, 29 were in North Dakota and one was in South Dakota. All of the offered parcels in the Dakotas received bids as did 21 of the Montana parcels.

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.

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.

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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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