



U.S. Department of the Interior
Minerals Management Service
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region



News Release

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Oil Companies Recognized for Safety Excellence

The Minerals Management Service (MMS) will present awards to several winners of the 1998 District Safety Award for Excellence (SAFE) honors. The SAFE Program was developed to recognize and commend those operating companies that expend extra effort and conduct their operations in a safe and pollution-free manner, adhering to all regulatory requirements, employing trained and motivated personnel, and taking extra steps to enhance the safety of operations and environmental protection.

In acknowledging these awards MMS Regional Director Chris Oynes, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, emphasizes "The winners of the District SAFE Awards have set very high standards for safety by their technical accomplishments and commitment to protection of the environment while conducting Federal offshore oil and natural gas operations. The district award winners complement the national award as well."

Receiving awards from the Houma District for the entire year will be CNG Producing Company for production operations and Diamond Offshore Drilling, Inc.'s *Ocean Crusader* for drilling operations.

Exxon Company U.S.A. will receive an award from the New Orleans District for the excellent manner in which the principles of operational safety and environmental protection were applied in the conduct of drilling operations during the entire year.

Mobil Producing Texas & New Mexico Inc. will be recognized by an award presented by the Lake Jackson District for adherence to applicable rules and regulations in their conduct of safe and pollution-free drilling operations in an environmentally sensitive area adjacent to coral reefs in the East Flower Garden Banks area during 1998.

In the Lafayette District, an award is to be presented to Ensco Drilling Company in recognition of their professional adherence to operating rules and regulations and the exemplary manner in which drilling operations were conducted by *Ensco 90 Drilling Rig* during 1998.

"Sound safety procedures and practices are as important as maintaining environmental integrity," said Oynes. "These industry leaders are setting standards others will match. Their overall performance demonstrates that we can produce offshore energy resources while protecting and respecting environmental concerns."

MMS and the oil companies that lease OCS lands are very proud of their safety record for offshore oil and natural gas exploration, development, production, and shipment-to-shore operations. "Our OCS

development record has been one of safe and environmentally clean operations. The MMS has regulations in place that, along with new technologies employed by industry, have created a safe production record," said Oynes.

The Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Lands Act as amended charges MMS with the responsibility of inspecting offshore oil and gas operations. Through the MMS Offshore Inspection Program, offshore activities of oil and gas operators are inspected on a continuing basis and enforcement actions are taken when MMS regulatory requirements are not met. Increased emphasis by MMS on enforcement actions to promote proper operating procedures has led to even better safety records.

Each company receives a certificate from MMS Regional Director Chris Oynes.

The SAFE Award was established by MMS in 1983 to recognize companies that enhanced operational safety and environmental protection for the Nation's Outer Continental Shelf. Award criteria for nominees include accuracy of recordkeeping, training, equipment maintenance, cooperation with MMS, and utilization of new technology.

MMS is the Federal Agency that manages the Nation's oil and gas and other mineral resources on the OCS and collects, accounts for, and last year disbursed about \$6 billion in revenues from Federal offshore mineral leases and from onshore mineral leases on Federal and Indian lands.

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