

are contained in the document "Lease Stipulations for Oil and Gas Lease Sale 172, Final" included in the Final Sale Notice Package. Also shown on this map are the deferred blocks noted above.

Rounding

The following procedure must be used to calculate minimum bid, rental, and minimum royalty on blocks with fractional acreage: Round up to the next whole acre and multiply by the applicable dollar amount to determine the correct minimum bid, rental, or minimum royalty.

Note: For the minimum bid only, if the calculation results in a decimal figure, round up to the next whole dollar amount (see next paragraph). The minimum bid calculation, including all rounding, is shown in the document "Blocks Available for Leasing in Gulf of Mexico OCS Oil and Gas Lease Sale 172" included in the Sale Notice Package.

Method of Bidding

For each block bid upon, a bidder must submit a separate signed bid in a sealed envelope labeled "Sealed Bid for Oil and Gas Lease Sale 172, not to be opened until 9 a.m., Wednesday, March 17, 1999." The total amount bid must be in a whole dollar amount; any cent amount above the whole dollar will be ignored by the MMS. Details of the information required on the bid(s) and the bid envelope(s) are specified in the document "Bid Form and Envelope" contained in the Sale Notice Package. The MMS published a list of restricted joint bidders, which applies to this sale, in the **Federal Register** at 63 FR 53097, on October 2, 1998. Bidders must execute all documents in conformance with signatory authorizations on file in the MMS Gulf of Mexico Regional Office. Partnerships also must submit or have on file a list of signatories authorized to bind the partnership. Bidders submitting joint bids must state on the bid form the proportionate interest of each participating bidder, in percent to a maximum of five decimal places, e.g., 33.33333 percent. The MMS may require bidders to submit other documents in accordance with 30 CFR 256.46. The MMS warns bidders against violation of 18 U.S.C. 1860 prohibiting unlawful combination or intimidation of bidders. Bidders are advised that the MMS considers the signed bid to be a legally binding obligation on the part of the bidder(s) to comply with all applicable regulations, including paying the 1/5th bonus on all high bids. A statement to this effect must be included on each bid (see the document "Bid Form and Envelope" contained in the Sale Notice Package).

Bid Deposit

Bidders will have the option of submitting the 1/5th cash bonus by cashier's check, bank draft, or certified check with the bid, or by using electronic funds transfer (EFT) procedures. Detailed instructions for submitting the 1/5th bonus payment by EFT are contained in the document "Instructions for Making EFT 1/5th Bonus Payments" included in the Sale Notice Package. Any payments will be deposited by the Government in an interest-bearing account in the U.S. Treasury during the period the bids are being considered. Such a deposit does not constitute and shall not be construed as acceptance of any bid on behalf of the United States.

Withdrawal of Blocks

The United States reserves the right to withdraw any block from this sale prior to issuance of a written acceptance of a bid for the block.

Acceptance, Rejection, or Return of Bids

The United States reserves the right to reject any and all bids. In any case, no bid will be accepted, and no lease for any block will be awarded to any bidder, unless the bidder has complied with all requirements of this Notice, including the documents contained in the associated Sale Notice Package and applicable regulations; the bid is the highest valid bid; and the amount of the bid has been determined to be adequate by the authorized officer. Any bid submitted which does not conform to the requirements of this Notice, the OCS Lands Act, as amended, and other applicable regulations may be returned to the person submitting that bid by the RD and not considered for acceptance. To ensure that the Government receives a fair return for the conveyance of lease rights for this sale, high bids will be evaluated in accordance with MMS bid adequacy procedures. A copy of the current procedures ("Summary of Procedures for Determining Bid Adequacy at Offshore Oil and Gas Lease Sales: Effective March 1999, with Sale 172") is available from the MMS Gulf of Mexico Regional Office Public Information Unit.

Successful Bidders

The MMS will require each person who has submitted a bid accepted by the authorized officer to execute copies of the lease (Form MMS-2005 (March 1986) as amended), pay the balance of the cash bonus bid along with the first year's annual rental for each lease issued by EFT in accordance with the requirements of 30 CFR 218.155, and

satisfy the bonding requirements of 30 CFR 256, Subpart I, as amended. Each person involved as a bidder in a successful high bid must have on file, in the MMS Gulf of Mexico Regional Office Adjudication Unit, a currently valid certification that the person is not excluded from participation in primary covered transactions under Federal nonprocurement programs and activities. A certification previously provided to that office remains currently valid until new or revised information applicable to that certification becomes available. In the event of new or revised applicable information, the MMS will require a subsequent certification before lease issuance can occur. Persons submitting such certifications should review the requirements of 43 CFR, Part 12, Subpart D. A copy of the certification form is contained in the Sale Notice Package.

Equal Opportunity

The certification required by 41 CFR 60-1.7(b) and Executive Order No. 11246 of September 24, 1965, as amended by Executive Order No. 11375 of October 13, 1967, on the Compliance Report Certification Form, Form MMS-2033 (June 1985), and the Affirmative Action Representation Form, Form MMS-2032 (June 1985) must be on file in the MMS Gulf of Mexico Regional Office prior to lease award.

Information to Lessees

The Sale Notice Package contains a document titled "Information to Lessees." These Information to Lessees items provide information on various matters of interest to potential bidders.

Cynthia Quarterman,

Director, Minerals Management Service.

Approved: February 10, 1999.

Sylvia V. Baca,

Acting Assistant Secretary, Land and Minerals Management.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Minerals Management Service

Outer Continental Shelf, Central Gulf of Mexico; Notice of Bidding Systems, Sale 172

Notice of Bidding Systems

Section 8(a)(8) (43 U.S.C. 1337(a)(8)) of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (OCSLA) requires that, at least 30 days before any lease sale, a Notice be submitted to the Congress and published in the **Federal Register**.

This Notice of Bidding Systems is for Sale 172, Central Gulf of Mexico, scheduled to be held in March 1999, as well as for all future sales, until and unless notice is given that an alternative system will be adopted.

The Minerals Management Service has mainly used the cash bonus bid with a fixed royalty rate since 1978. The 1978 law requiring notice of the bidding systems and the rationale behind each

system anticipated the use of many different systems. We have determined, and explained previously, that the system currently in use best meets our mission objectives. Unless the MMS publishes a Notice announcing use of a different bidding system, we will continue to use the cash bonus/fixed royalty rate system for future sales. The specific blocks offered under each system will be shown on the "Lease

Terms and Economic Conditions" map that is prepared for each lease sale.

Cynthia Quarterman,

Director, Minerals Management Service.

Approved: February 10, 1999.

Sylvia V. Baca,

Acting Assistant Secretary, Land and Minerals Management.

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