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BILLINGS – A record high bid for a federal oil and gas lease sold in Montana and the Dakotas was registered at the Bureau of Land Management’s bi-monthly lease sale in Billings July 27.

Behm Energy of Minot, N.D., bid \$1,819,725 for leasing rights on a Forest Service parcel in McKenzie County, N.D. That bonus bid was a record for oil and gas leases in Montana and the Dakota since leasing under the 1987 Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act began. Although an exhaustive check of archived records was not made, local BLM employees believed that the bonus bid may be the highest ever received for a single parcel in this area.

Behm Energy also had the second highest bid of \$660,450 for an adjoining Forest Service parcel in McKenzie County.

Total bonus bids and rentals for the sale amounted to \$3,142,712.

All offered parcels were located in Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota, and included Forest Service parcels within the Dakota Prairie Grasslands Environmental Impact Study area.

Oil and gas production in Montana and the Dakotas is an important component of our national energy supply. Last year, federal wells in the three states produced 8.6 million barrels of oil, 29 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, and more than \$40 million in royalties.

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 (January/March/May/July/September/November) 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, P.O. Box 36800, Billings, Mont., 59107, or by calling (406) 896-5004.

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