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MMS REORGANIZES TO DO MORE WITH LESS (#40050)

The Interior Department's Minerals Management Service (MMS) has begun to streamline itself to meet the objectives of the Clinton Administration's Reinventing Government effort and the National Performance Review (NPR) in its commitment to invent a leaner government that better serves its customers.

"This reorganization reflects MMS's determination to respond to the Administration's efforts to streamline government while maintaining high quality performance and top-notch service to our customers," MMS Director Tom Fry said.

A new Office of Communications and Government Affairs (OCGA) combines the duties and personnel of the former Offices of Public Affairs, External Affairs and Congressional and Legislative Affairs. The office is responsible for communications strategy and outreach to all customers and stakeholders of MMS. Its goal is to ensure a coordinated and consistent message and exchange of information. The new arrangement will allow for issue management teams from all three areas of expertise to be formed. Lyn Herdt is the new OCGA Chief; the office phone number is (202) 208-3985. Customers should continue to contact the same staff persons they have worked with in the past.

The establishment of the new office allows MMS to reduce the supervisor-to-employee ratio in its customer support offices from 1:4 to 1:12. The new structure will allow the office to maximize individual skills through cross-training, and the establishment of project- and task-oriented teams. The new structure allows an immediate reduction in support staff, and cross-training will allow MMS to further lower staff levels without reducing customer service when present staff resign, retire or are reassigned.

MMS's Policy and Management Improvement (PMI) office reduced layers of management, eliminating the position of Deputy Associate Director for Management Improvement and consolidating into three divisions: Appeals, Offshore Minerals Analysis, and Royalty Management Analysis. Those replace the five divisions of Program Review, Strategic Improvement, Quality and Productivity Improvement, Appeals and Litigation Support, and Policy and Planning. The reorganized Associate Director's office will have a

Policy Coordination staff that will strengthen the agency's commitment to NPR activities and provide a quick response to cross-cutting agency issues.

The reorganization of the Royalty Management Program (RMP) will consolidate existing Divisions and Offices under the two currently occupied positions of Deputy Associate Director (DAD) for Compliance and for Valuation and Operations. Formerly the RMP had three DAD positions: Compliance, Audit and Operations. The position of DAD for Operations had never been filled. In addition, Indian audit activities were streamlined by merging Indian audit teams with the State and Indian Compliance office. The Tulsa office was combined with the Dallas Compliance Office, and compliance offices were retitled Divisions.

MMS has also closed its Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf regional office. The move will result in a better use of staff and available resources, Fry said, because MMS has focused its resources increasingly in other areas in recent years. Remaining functions of the Atlantic office will be handled by the Gulf of Mexico regional office in New Orleans and the Offshore Minerals Management office in Herndon, VA.

"It's good government, just as it's good business, to step back and look at ourselves, focus on our priorities and the needs of our customers and determine whether the current structure still makes sense," Fry said. "We need to be responsive and cost-efficient just as our customers and stakeholders who've been challenged to restructure in today's business climate."

Fry said MMS will continue to examine its structure and to streamline where possible.

MMS is the agency which manages and regulates the nation's natural gas, oil and other mineral resources on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), and which collects and disburses revenues from OCS leases and from onshore leases on Federal and Indian lands.

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