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MMS ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARDS

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service today announced that Gunnar Berge, Magne Ognedal and Odd Bjerre Finnestad, of the Norwegian Petroleum Directorate (NPD) and Taf Powell of the United Kingdom's Health and Safety Executive (HSE) will receive International Leadership Awards at the MMS Industry Awards Program.

The four recipients have demonstrated outstanding leadership in facilitating the exchange of information among offshore regulatory agencies, encouraging cooperation on offshore safety and pollution prevention issues, coordinating participation in the development of international standards, cooperating on safety audits and research projects, compiling incident data, exchanging training information and discussing materials and equipment issues.

"The HSE and NPD share our commitment to offshore safety achievement," said MMS Director Johnnie Burton. "We have benefited greatly from exchanging information and ideas, and jointly addressing common concerns. MMS regulates an international industry. By cooperating with other regulatory agencies on safety issues, we can facilitate international commerce while minimizing risks to personnel and the environment."

The MMS Industry Awards program and luncheon will be at the Westin Galleria hotel in Houston on April 29, 2003. Registration information is available at www.boem.gov.

MMS is the federal agency in the U.S. Department of the Interior that manages the nation's oil, natural gas, and other mineral resources on the outer continental shelf in federal offshore waters. The agency also collects, accounts for, and disburses mineral revenues from federal and American Indian leases. These revenues totaled over \$6 billion in 2002 and nearly \$127 billion since the agency was created in 1982. Annually, nearly \$1 billion from those revenues go into the Land and Water Conservation Fund for the acquisition and development of state and federal park and recreation lands.

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