

by *Chris Oynes*  
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## MMS Plan for Deep- and Ultra-Deepwater Leasing in the Gulf Of Mexico and Assessing 2005 Hurricane Damage to the Outer Continental Shelf

The Regional Director for the Gulf of Mexico OCS Region of the Minerals Management Service, Chris Oynes, will present a talk to a joint meeting of the Houston Geological Society and Houston Petroleum Area Landmen (HAPL). He will review several recent key events in the Gulf of Mexico and summarize the recent oil and gas lease sales and their contribution to the growth of the deepwater and ultra-deepwater exploration and development. Deepwater exploration (greater than 1,000 feet of water depth) and ultra-deepwater exploration (greater than 5,000 feet of water depth) have added large reserves to the Gulf of Mexico OCS in recent years and provide a substantial portion of the total production and a large percentage of the total domestic U.S. production. Mr. Oynes will provide insight to future trends in leasing and potential exploration and production areas.

Two of the most significant events in 2005 were the landfall of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Mr. Oynes will provide an overview of the destruction caused by these hurricanes and discuss their impacts on the OCS production. Both hurricanes destroyed numerous drilling rigs and broke a significant number of rigs free of their moorings. Mr. Oynes will discuss the hurricanes' impact along with the Minerals Management Service's research activities to the review of design standards for platforms and drilling rigs. ■

### Biographical Sketch

CHRIS OYNES is the Regional Director for the Gulf of Mexico OCS Region of Minerals Management Service, located in New Orleans. Mr. Oynes manages the leasing of the OCS lands for oil,

gas and other mineral development and supervises the regulation of operations and the protection of the environment on those leases, which involve 4,000 platforms; covering the five Gulf Coast states. He manages a staff of 550, comprising environmental scientists, biologists, geologists, geophysicists and petroleum engineers. Mr. Oynes received a Presidential Award (1998) as a Meritorious Executive in the senior executive service of the federal government. He has received the two highest honor awards that the U.S. Department of the Interior bestows. Chris Oynes earned a JD degree from George Washington University and he has 29 years of federal government experience with energy matters.

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The 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 federally-owned offshore waters. The agency also collects, accounts for and disburses mineral revenues from federal and American Indian lands. The MMS disbursed more than \$8 billion in FY 2004 and more than \$143 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.

