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BLM Reduces Adoption Fee For 4 –year-old and Older Geldings and Studs in December

The Bureau of Land Management Burns District announced today it will offer 83 geldings and studs that are four years old or older for adoption at a reduced fee of \$25 each during December. In addition, anyone who adopts a promotion animal will qualify for free hauling from the Burns facility up to 400 miles one way. The standard adoption fee for wild horses and burros is \$125 and free hauling has only been offered once before in Oregon and Washington.

While providing savings to potential adopters, the reduced adoption fee is aimed at moving more BLM-managed animals that are currently in holding facilities into good homes of private owners. The BLM's cost for maintaining wild horses and burros in short- and long-term holding facilities accounts for more than half of the agency's total wild horse and burro budget, which was \$36.8 million in Fiscal Year 2006.

"We hope that anyone who has the interest and means of providing good care for these geldings and studs will come to our facility in December," said Burns District Manager Dana Shuford. Under the BLM's adoption program, an individual can adopt up to four animals within a one-year period; under certain circumstances, more than four can be adopted, but an adopter can receive titles of ownership to only four animals during that timeframe. Qualified adopters are eligible to receive title after providing one year of humane care.

Under the authority of the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act, the BLM manages, protects, and controls wild horses and burros as part of its overall multiple-use mission. The Bureau works to ensure that population levels are in balance with rangeland resources and other uses of the public lands; toward that end, the BLM removes thousands of wild horses and burros from the range each year to control the size of herds, which have virtually no predators and can double in population about every four years.

The current free-roaming population of wild horses and burros on BLM-managed lands is about 31,000, which exceeds by some 3,500 the number determined by the Bureau to be the appropriate management level. Off the range, there are more than 28,000 wild horses and burros cared for in either short-term (corral) or long-term (pasture) facilities. All animals in holding are protected by the BLM under the 1971 law.

The Bureau works to place as many of the wild horses and burros that are in holding into private care, and since 1973, the BLM has placed 214,000 animals into private ownership through adoption. Under a December 2004 amendment to the 1971 law, the Bureau also seeks good homes through sales of horses and burros that are more than 10 years old or have been passed over for adoption at least three times. (In the case of sales, the title of ownership passes immediately from the Federal government to the buyer.) Since that amendment took effect, the BLM has sold 2,200 eligible horses and burros. The BLM encourages those who are interested in providing good homes to wild horses or burros to visit the agency's Website (www.blm.gov) for information about adoptions or sales.

