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BLM Sets Meeting to Hear Suggestions for Managing Geothermal Energy

The Bureau of Land Management will hold a public meeting in Reno, Nevada to solicit suggestions on how best to implement the provisions of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 that relate to geothermal energy on the public lands.

The meeting will be held on Thursday, November 17, 2005 at the Hilton Hotel, 2500 East Second Street in Reno from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. local (Pacific) time. Representatives of the geothermal industry and interested members of the public from across the region and the nation will be invited to offer suggestions for implementation and to discuss their interests and concerns with the geothermal sections of the Act.

“Geothermal energy is a dependable, environmentally sound way to generate electric power and heat,” said Tom Lonnie, the BLM’s Assistant Director for Minerals, Realty and Resource Protection. “Developing geothermal energy resources on Federal lands will help meet the important goal of diversifying the Nation’s energy supply with renewable sources.”

The Energy Policy Act has a number of provisions that encourage development of geothermal resources on public lands. The Act requires the BLM to hold a competitive sale of geothermal leases at least every two years and to establish procedures to expedite processing of pending geothermal applications. Among numerous production incentives in the Act is a simplified royalty formula for direct use of geothermal resources. The Act further directs the BLM to address geothermal leasing and development in all land use plans.

The BLM will use the suggestions gathered at the meeting to guide the agency’s efforts to implement these provisions of the Act, Lonnie said.

Geothermal resources are developed both for direct use (steam to heat buildings and for use in greenhouses and aquaculture) and for generation of electric power. Almost half of the Nation’s production of geothermal energy occurs on Federal land, much of it in California and Nevada. Other states with geothermal activity include Utah, New Mexico and Oregon. Geothermal energy accounts for 17 percent of the electricity generated from renewable sources in the U.S.

The BLM manages 261 million surface acres located mostly in 12 Western States, including Alaska – more land than any other Federal agency. With a budget of about \$1.8 billion, the Bureau also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the U.S. Managing these lands gives the BLM a central role in implementing the Energy Policy Act of 2005. Acting as steward of numerous energy resources – coal, oil and gas, geothermal, hydropower, solar, wind, and biomass energy resources – is part of the agency’s multiple-use mission to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

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