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BLM approves coal lease application in Rio Blanco, Moffat counties

MEEKER, Colo. – Today the Bureau of Land Management signed a final decision to offer 3,157 acres of federal coal reserves in Rio Blanco and Moffat counties in a future competitive coal lease sale.

Blue Mountain Energy Inc. submitted a Lease by Application for this parcel adjacent to its Deserado Mine, which is seven miles northeast of Rangely, Colo., and currently employs 164 people. The BLM estimates this parcel contains 21 million tons of saleable coal.

The BLM conducted an environmental assessment that included two opportunities for public comment on the proposed lease. A 30-day appeal period follows today's decision. A sealed bid, competitive coal lease sale will be scheduled following the appeal period.

The decision and final environmental assessment is available at <http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/wrfo/index.html>.

About 90 percent of coal deposits in Colorado occur on public lands. Currently, there are nine producing coal mines (seven underground and two surface operations) encompassing 75,000 acres in the state. In Fiscal Year 2011, coal energy production on BLM Colorado's public lands directly contributed \$884 million to the economy.

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