

financially by having pandas at their facility and/or are being held under a loan (e.g., lease-hold agreement) from China or other lending entity. The proposed recipient of the panda will need to provide all the information required by the ESA, its regulations, and this policy in order for the Service to make its findings prior to issuance of a permit. The Service will facilitate, to the extent possible, the transfer of animals within the United States when it is part of a coordinated research or research/breeding program. If the receiving institution has a panda permit on file with the Service, it can reference the permit number and information in this file, and provide any new information for the Service to review in consideration of an interstate commerce permit. Because applications will be published in the **Federal Register**, the applicant will need to allow at least 90 days for processing. Since transfers must also have the prior approval of the Chinese government or the entity that owns the animals, a permittee must have prior approval of the Service to transfer pandas within a state, and the proposed recipient should address all of the considerations noted in this policy. The number of times an individual panda is transferred within the United States will be closely monitored by the Service to protect the overall health and well-being of the animal.

This notice was prepared under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Dated: June 22, 1998.

Jamie Rappaport Clark,

Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[MT-921-08-1320-01; NDM 86601]

Coal Lease Offering

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of coal lease offering by sealed bid: NDM 86601—Knife River Corporation.

U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Montana State Office, Granite Tower Building, 222 North 32nd Street, P.O. Box 36800, Billings, Montana 59107-6800.

Notice is hereby given that the coal resources in the lands described below in Mercer County, North Dakota, will be

offered for competitive lease by sealed bid. This offering is being made as a result of an application filed by Knife River Corporation, in accordance with the provisions of the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 (41 Stat. 437; 30 U.S.C. 181-287), as amended.

An Environmental Assessment of the proposed coal development and related requirements for consultation, public involvement, and hearing have been completed in accordance with 43 CFR 3425. The results of these activities were a finding of no significant environmental impact.

The tract will be leased to the qualified bidder of the highest cash amount provided that the high bid meets the fair market value of the coal resource. The minimum bid for the tract is \$100 per acre, or fraction thereof. No bid that is less than \$100 per acre, or fraction thereof, will be considered. The minimum bid is not intended to represent fair market value. The fair market value will be determined by the authorized officer after the sale.

Coal Offered: The coal resource to be offered consists of all recoverable reserves in the following-described lands located approximately 2.5 miles south of the town of Beulah, North Dakota:

T. 143 N., R. 88 E., 5th P.M.,
Sec. 24: NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$,
S $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$.

Containing 360 acres, Mercer County, North Dakota.

There are three principal minable coal seams in the tract. They are the School House, Upper Beulah-Zap, and Lower Beulah-Zap. The tract contains an estimated 6.21 million tons of recoverable reserves.

The School House seam averages 5.8 feet in thickness. Coal quality, as received, averages 6,643 BTU/lb., 36.66 percent moisture, 10.43 percent ash, and 1.24 percent sulfur.

The Upper Beulah-Zap seam averages 10.9 feet in thickness. Coal quality, as received, averages 6,776 BTU/lb., 38.52 percent moisture, 5.94 percent ash, and 0.49 percent sulfur.

The Lower Beulah-Zap seam averages 3.5 feet in thickness. Coal quality, as received, averages 6,717 BTU/lb., 38.27 percent moisture, 7.32 percent ash, and 0.76 percent sulfur.

Rental and Royalty: A lease issued as a result of this offering will provide for payment of an annual rental of \$3 per acre, or fraction thereof, and a royalty payable to the United States of 12.5 percent of the value of the coal mined by surface methods and 8.0 percent of the value of the coal mined by underground methods. The value of the

coal shall be determined in accordance with 43 CFR 3485.2.

Date: The lease sale will be held at 10 a.m., Wednesday, September 30, 1998, in Side B of the Conference Room on the Sixth Floor of the Granite Tower Building at the above address.

Sealed Bids: Sealed bids must be submitted on or before 9 a.m., Wednesday, September 30, 1998, to the cashier, Bureau of Land Management, Montana State Office, Second Floor, Granite Tower Building, 222 North 32nd Street, P.O. Box 36800, Billings, Montana 59107-6800. The bids should be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, or be hand-delivered. The cashier will issue a receipt for each hand-delivered bid. Bids received after that time will not be considered.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION: Bidding instructions for the offered tract are included in the Detailed Statement of Lease Sale. Copies of the statement and the proposed coal lease are available at the Montana State Office. Casefile documents are also available for public inspection at the Montana State Office.

Dated: August 20, 1998.

John E. Moorhouse,

Acting State Director.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[NM-910-08-1020-00]

New Mexico Resource Advisory Council Meeting

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of council meeting.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972 (FACA), 5 U.S.C. Appendix 1, The Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), announces a meeting of the New Mexico Resource Advisory Council (RAC). The meeting will be held on October 1 and 2, 1998 at the Amberley Suites Hotel, 7620 Pan American NE, Albuquerque, NM 87109.

The meeting on Thursday October 1 starts at 8:30 a.m., and the meeting on Friday October 2 starts at 8:00 a.m. The agenda for the RAC meeting includes agreement on the meeting agenda, any RAC comments on the draft summary minutes of the last RAC meeting on July 30 and 31, 1998 in Taos, NM., BLM Field Office Managers presentations,