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BLM Seeks Bids for Two New Pasture Facilities in West to care for and Maintain Wild Horses and Burros

As part of its responsibility to manage, protect, and control wild horses and burros, the Bureau of Land Management is soliciting bids for two new pasture facilities located west of the Mississippi River. Each pasture facility must be able to provide humane care for and maintain up to 1,500 wild horses and burros over a one-year period, starting about November 1, 2006, with an option under BLM contract for an additional four one-year extensions. The BLM needs additional space for wild horses and burros placed in long-term holding facilities, all of which are currently located in Kansas and Oklahoma.

Details of the BLM's requirements will be posted in solicitation NAR060253, which will be available at <http://www.fbo.gov> on or about September 6, 2006. Applicants must be registered at <http://www.ccr.gov> to be considered for a contract award.

The BLM manages wild horses and burros as part of its overall multiple-use land management mission. Under the authority of the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act, the Bureau manages and protects these living symbols of the Western spirit while ensuring that population levels are in balance with other public rangeland resources and uses. To achieve this balance, the BLM must remove thousands of animals from the range each year to control the size of herds, which have virtually no predators and can double in population every four years. The current free-roaming population of BLM-managed wild horses and burros is about 31,000, which exceeds by some 3,000 the number determined by the BLM to be the appropriate management level. Off the range, there are about 26,000 wild horses and burros cared for in either short-term (corral) or long-term (pasture) facilities.

After wild horses and burros are removed from the range, the Bureau works to place younger animals into private ownership through adoption. Since 1973, the BLM has placed more than 213,000 horses and burros into good private homes through adoption. Under a December 2004 amendment to the 1971 wild horse law, animals over 10 years old, as well as those passed over for adoption at least three times, are eligible for sale. Since that amendment took effect, the BLM has sold more than 1,900 horses and burros.

For information about the BLM's wild horse and burro adoption program, see <http://www.wildhorseandburro.blm.gov>; for information about the agency's sale of older wild horses and burros, see http://www.blm.gov/nhp/spotlight/whb_authority.