

## ***Interior budget totals \$6.3 billion***

Interior Secretary Don Hodel earlier this month announced a Fiscal Year 1988 budget that "supports the president's goals" and totals \$6.3 billion.

The budget is \$1 million less than the current 1987 estimate.

"Interior's budget focuses on the protection of our existing resources," Hodel said. "Continued emphasis is given to operation of national parks and to development of energy and mineral resources."

He said among the several management efficiencies proposed in the budget are major efforts to strengthen enforcement of the surface mining laws, to improve oversight of the department's revenue collection and regulatory activities and to provide ready access by the public to land and mineral records through automation.

"The budget also highlights significant new initiatives for American Indians and for the completion of water resource projects," he said.

Interior officials are proposing in the budget that the costs of administering federal mineral leasing programs be shared equally with the states before receipt payments are made to them.

"The philosophy of sharing with the states is sound, but placing the entire cost of collection on one party, the federal government, is not," Hodel said.

Under current law, states receive half of all receipts derived from minerals on public lands without incurring any of the costs of producing the receipts, Hodel said. Alaska is the exception because it gets 90 percent.

Full funding is proposed in the Bureau of Land Management for payments in lieu of taxes to states and counties.

The Interior Department is one of the federal government's largest producers of revenue. Total receipts in Fiscal Year 1988 are estimated to be \$6.5 billion, of which \$3.09 billion will come from mineral leasing on the Outer Continental Shelf and \$1.05 billion from mineral leasing onshore.