BLM defends its Burning Man requests

By Reno Gazette-Journal

Federal Bureau of Land Management officials defended on Sunday their request for special housing accommodations during the annual Burning Man festival in Nevada, disputing comments by Sen. Harry Reid and others that the plans are unnecessary and extravagant.

A *Reno Gazette-Journal* investigation broke the details of the request last week.

Burning Man organizers have refused the request, saying amenities such as flush toilets, washers and dryers, showers, air conditioning and refrigerators at the bureau's on-site camp in the Black Rock Desert would cost $1 million and increase permit fees to about $5 million.

The request, a first of its kind in Burning Man's history, has turned into a point of contention as organizers negotiate with the agency for their annual permit to stage the event in the Black Rock Desert. No permit has been issued for this year's event, which runs Aug. 30 to Sept. 7. Permits are typically issued in early August.

Gene Seidlitz, the bureau's Winnemucca district manager, said Sunday to the Associated Press that the cost of the portable units is being "robustly exaggerated" by organizers. The compound will offer basic amenities only for top agency officials who oversee the event, he said.

Read the whole story