

From scads of cell phones to scales, state sells surplus online

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From pen knives to bulldozers, things small and big, cheap and expensive are offered for sale online to highest bidders.

Is it eBay?

Not this site, established by a former Lawtonian, John Richard, and operated by the Oklahoma Department of Central Services, the agency Richard directs and which is responsible for getting rid of all makes, models and manners of stuff identified as surplus by the state.

An item owned by the state becomes surplus when it is determined that it is broken, obsolete, unused or simply not needed anymore, according to Gerry Smedley, public information officer for the DCS.

"The program receives almost every conceivable item one could

State online auction facts:

- Items offered through the online auction are sold "as-is-where-is."
- Transactions are subject to Oklahoma sales tax unless buyer is eligible for exemption. An online service fee is \$2.
- Items must be paid for online. Accepted methods include credit and debit cards - Visa or MasterCard.
- Deadline for online auction pick-up of an item is eight days from the end of the sale date.
- More information for bidders and buyers can be found at the site, www.auction.ok.gov.

think of," she said. "For instance, computers, bulldozers, hospital equipment, furniture, clothing, kitchen utensils and equipment, vehicles and copiers."

Knives, lighters and other items that passengers are not allowed to carry onto airplanes and that are collected by security personnel at airports are periodically sold through the state surplus program.

Unique items offered last week included a full set of golf clubs and an antique plow.

At the site, www.auction.ok.gov potential bidders can look over a listing of most popular items offered, which last week included six wooden chairs that, as of Saturday, had attracted a high bid of \$20.04, and photographic equipment and supplies, including a

Quasar camcorder, which had attracted a high bid of only \$35. A listing of "most recently added" items included a Health-o-Meter scale like one a patient would see in a doctor's office, which had garnered only the minimum acceptable bid of \$25, and a box of cell phones and pagers weighing approximately 220 pounds, for which someone had posted the minimum acceptable bid of \$175.

"We believe citizens find bargains," Smedley said, "(which is) evidenced by their increased purchasing."

The eBay-style auction site also has been a good deal for the state, she said, in that surplus that must be sold is now much more visible to a wider range of potential buyers, less warehouse space is required to store surplus and it moves more efficiently through the process.

"It has increased what the state re-

ceives for disposal of surplus items because the State Surplus Online Auction provides the program with another avenue to the general public," Smedley said.

As of July, 6,700 people had taken the few minutes required to become registered bidders at the site. Smedley said many bidders report that the site is at least as easy and convenient to use as eBay.

Approximately \$600,000 worth of goods were sold through the online auction site in fiscal year 2008, she said. Prior to the State Surplus Online Auction, the general public could only purchase state government surplus items at a monthly public auction, which is still held on the second Friday of every month at 2530 W. Reno in Oklahoma City. A phone number to call for more information is (405) 525-2354.

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