

Sold! Municipalities to Use State's iBid Web Site to Auction Surplus Property

State opens its innovative iBid on-line auction service to local governments

An innovative auction service website – sometimes called “the eBay of Illinois” – has expanded the market for State agencies’ surplus computers, vehicles, chairs and other property from about 100 people in Springfield to 12,653 registered bidders worldwide.

Now, Illinois municipalities can use the iBid on-line auction system to sell their unneeded items.

This Web-based alternative to time-intensive, local auctions can expand the market for cities’ surplus property exponentially. Municipalities are expected to find – as the State has – that auctioning property on-line can significantly boost the number of bids, the amount of bids (and thus, dollars received) and, as a result, their taxpayers’ return on investment.

Best of all, the cost to municipalities to use the State service – which is run by the Department of Central Management Services, (CMS) the State’s main administrative and property agency – is about half of most on-online auction systems. CMS now allows local Illinois governments to use the iBid service for 4.5% per item – substantially less than eBay, which charges sellers 8% per item. (The highest bidder on iBid pays for the given item, as well as small surcharges for the service and for shipping and handling.)

All municipalities have to do is sign an agreement, send photos and descriptions of the items they want to auction, and wait for the bids to roll in.

Using iBid, local governments can auction off surplus equipment immediately – and more often than just once a year, if they wish – instead of having to arrange a “live” auction every time, with all the hassles of procuring an auctioneer, finding a suitable location and drumming up potential bidders.

Outside observers have noted that

computers and other equipment auctioned via iBid often nets higher prices than local auctions or even eBay for equivalent items. Recent upgrades to the on-line system now lets those 12,000-plus registered people view competing bids, place absentee bids and bid on multiple items simultaneously – which is expected to drive more and higher bids for surplus government property.

The iBid initiative began in 2003, in an effort to find creative ways to reduce operating costs, increase revenue and generate a higher return for Illinois taxpayers. Since then, CMS has sold more than 5,700 surplus items via iBid for more than \$1.4 million and the agency expects the recent upgrade and additional government sellers to boost those numbers.

For more information, municipalities can contact CMS Property Manager Curt Howard, who leads the State’s surplus property operations, at 217/782-7786 or curtis.howard@illinois.gov. ■



The very first item sold on the State's iBid property auction service - a confiscated 1986 Corvette - went for \$2,000 more than the car's retail price, which demonstrates the power of the on-line system. And last year the 1948 Ford-Howe fire engine pictured above went for \$5,556.

Since August 2003, the innovative website www.ibid.illinois.gov has sold more than \$1 million of surplus government property including boats, motorcycles, snowmobiles, John Deere tractors, a helicopter, a Fighting Illini football locker, tools, cameras, an electric bass guitar, furniture, LCD projectors, medical supplies, antiques and a Zamboni ice-resurfacing machine. Now, Illinois municipalities can use the State's iBid service to auction off their unneeded vehicles and equipment.