

# Smart Storytelling is Secret to Surplus Success

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You may not expect to find a Coach purse or designer sunglasses among surplus government property, but these are the treasures waiting to be found on the auction site, GovDeals. Quality merchandise combined with entertaining posts on the third-party site have attracted fans and earned recognition thanks to our team of three spinning creative stories to sell the items.

“One of the things we’ve tried to do with our posts is have fun in an irreverent way,” said Brent Burke, who works in distribution and prepares the items for sale. “We made a decision early on that we wanted to make interesting lots focused on specific themes.”



Last month, the team, who balances preparing auction items with other duties in the distribution department, posted their 1000<sup>th</sup> item – “A GovDeals Post Gala.” The post includes a vintage fur, jewelry, and designer goods perfect for a night on the town, paparazzi in tow.

Over the years, auctions have ranged from all-pink items to a lot described only with alliteration. This unique approach has earned their work some time in the spotlight: They were recognized with a Govvie Award in 2017 for creativity and talent in the field of government online auctions. Erik Milliron conceptualized two award-winning posts: the “Santa Faye Style” jewelry collection, inspired by Faye Dunaway, and the “Fit for a Tween” lot, which GovDeals judges declared to be *totally* OMG-worthy.

If you ask Erik, there wasn’t much competition.

“That’s what prompted us to take this approach,” he said. “All the other government auctions out there seemed so vanilla.”

Sunglasses, watches, purses, jewelry and electronics make up the majority of merchandise for sale – all are items frequently lost or abandoned at Portland International Airport. Other surplus goods – anything from office furniture to a tugboat or old HVAC parts – are also sold on the site. Since 2011, sales have allowed us to recoup more than \$640,000.

Bargain hunters should bookmark the site, as you never know what might turn up.

“We’ve sold an armadillo shell ukulele, fly fishing rods and airport seats,” said Brent. “For a lot of the weird stuff we sell, I always think, ‘How could you leave this behind?’”