



Online Auction of Seized Guns Just the Ticket for Drug Task Force



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*Matt Cousins, Director
2nd Judicial Drug Task Force,
Sullivan County, Tennessee*

A drug conspiracy case left the 2nd Judicial Drug Task Force in Sullivan County, Tenn., in possession of about 80 guns from a property seizure. The task force investigated the option of selling the firearms to help fund its operations and equipment. Ideally, the sale would minimize work for the staff and provide the most income possible. With the help of a local gun dealer and GunBroker.com®, both of those goals were achieved, resulting in more than \$35,000 in proceeds to support the task force's mission and the war on drugs.

Task force officials partnered with Volunteer Gun Shop in Bristol, Tenn., to help sell the guns. Since the shop uses GunBroker.com® to sell its own inventory of guns, owner Terry Messer knew from experience that the online auction site is an effective way to reach more firearm enthusiasts all over the country.

"The task force was looking for a simple way to auction the guns and we learned that Volunteer Gun Shop could easily sell the guns on GunBroker.com®," said Matt Cousins, director of the task force.

With more than 1.35 million registered users, GunBroker.com® is the world's largest online auction for firearms and hunting/shooting accessories. The site draws around 2.7 million unique visitors each month and hosts more than 300,000 auctions daily. GunBroker.com® manages the auction process, while bidders and sellers make their own arrangements for payment and delivery.

Putting the weapons up for sale on GunBroker.com® attracted more prospective buyers and better prices, rather than a local physical auction. In addition, the task force wasn't stuck with a lot of guns that no one locally would buy.

"We were able to raise more money by selling online on GunBroker.com®," Cousins said. "From my experience, collectors and more knowledgeable people use the site, which leads to fair prices for the guns."

"It's a good way to move inventory," Messer said. "It takes a lot of the risk away. It would have taken me too long if there had to be a physical auction."

As a result of the experience, the drug task force plans to work again with Volunteer Gun Shop and GunBroker.com®.

The sale of seized property has become vital to the task force's operations. As a result of a decrease in federal drug enforcement grant funding, the task force must work to make up the budget shortfall. Proceeds from property sales are used for task force operation and surveillance equipment expenses.

"It was much easier to take the guns to Volunteer Gun Shop and allow them to handle the auction," Cousins said. "Not only did it bring in \$35,000, but it saved us several man-hours that would have been spent selling guns. GunBroker.com® is an effective tool for law enforcement agencies to use to boost income from surplus or seized property."



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