

Tiger Auctioneering

Licensed, (WA LIC #2730 ID#214), Bonded, Insured
Comprehensive Auction Services & Quality Events
Estate, Business, Equipment, Farm, Fund Raising
1341 15th Clarkston, WA 99403
509-751-1161 Cell 208-503-0235

March 9th, 2009

Ralph C. Osgood
State of Washington Department of Licensing

Re: New Licensing Legislation:

Dear Mr. Osgood,

I received your letter concerning the Licensing of Auctioneers. I would like to state that I am one of many professional Auctioneers who is **very much opposed** to the proposed elimination of licensing, bonding and insurance requirements in this or any State. The President of the National Auctioneer's Association who I work with on a weekly basis shares this opinion as strongly as I do.

Auctioneers are the fiduciary agents of our clients. Like in any profession that handles money for others there are ethical and legal considerations. Not having requirements to obtain License, Bond and Insurance for public auction would invite more unqualified, untrained and incompetent opportunity seekers and damage the overall industry.

We handle tens of thousands of dollars of other people's money; we take their property and are trusted to sell it to the highest bidder, many times without them being present. We sell living estates for dying clients who depend on us to help their spouse or heirs get as much as possible for a lifetime of work. We act as their legal agent, banker, adviser and sometimes from financial ruin.

Do you think your attorney, real estate agent, financial broker or doctor should be licensed and responsible? When you trust all your property and future to an Auctioneer he or she becomes all of the above to a degree.

There are those that do not do auctions because they cannot get Insurance, bond, or a trust account. Unscrupulous, incompetent or dishonest auctioneers create a real liability for all those who try to do it right. We fight the negative reputation and impression generated by auctioneers who do not do their job as it is. I don't care how strict you make the laws; just don't make it easier for pretenders to damage the public image and reputation we try so hard to maintain. Damage will not only be done to all responsible auctioneers, but even more damage will be done to the elderly and heirs of estate sales who come to us to solve problems and handle the liquidation of their home and property.

Every honest auctioneer knows some who are not and a few horror stories from those who have trusted these people to auction their property. When an auction is not properly advertised and conducted the client and other auctioneers are the victim.

My dad went to Auctioneer School in 1953 and I am a graduate of the Western College of Auctioneering. My background and training alone does not mean I'm qualified for every auction event I need to conduct so I consult with others who are. My requirement to be licensed is just one small way of telling a new customer that I'm a legitimate professional. The license does not mean I'm honest either, but the fact that my clients can call the BBB, the NAA, other Clients or the State and my Insurance Company, makes it harder for me to be dishonest and still stay in business, or if I had a habit of doing a poor job, being unfair to either client or buyer.

Then there are those who target States that have no regulations with "drive through auctions". Shilling and puffing may be a crime, but without a license how do you enforce the law and discourage this? For example, when auctions are conducted in this area, supposedly by an Auction Company out of Kansas, they set up in Idaho because it is much easier to get licensed there than in Washington if they even bother to do that? The fact that Washington has a stricter Licensing requirement is a good thing for the Auction industry and the consumer. It discourages the fly by night practices. The long term problems that will result from any lessening or elimination of license by the State will be more lawsuits from irresponsibly conducted auctions.

I am the busiest Auctioneer in the Clarkston area and have established a loyal following and we receive many compliments on how we do things. I read the auction terms, protocol and our policies before every auction and state my license number. This is good business and educates the buyer. The buyers need to be treated fairly and the seller needs to know our primary responsibility is to get as much for their property as is ethically possible. A license is one part of that process.

I would encourage you to visit with the NAA or its President who has conducted over 1700 auctions and asked for suggestions on how to better the industry by asking auctioneers to state policy, terms and bidding protocol in a standardized form before all auctions like we do.

The States that don't have licensing requirements may not see the damage or have any method of reporting the negative impact no license has had to commerce, but the NAA and it's members can testify to it.

It is not unfair that someone in the auction profession be asked to show proof of a trust account, insurance, bond and license to operate within this State. It is also important that legitimate auctioneers be able to call in violations and report illegal auction events to prevent them from giving us all a bad name by association. I've worked hard to build my business and reputation and I do not appreciate someone promoting an auction in this area or anywhere in the State who is not qualified or does not care about the auction industry or the client.

I personally do not believe applicants should be required to attend auction school, but it helps. I think they should be recognized by two or three long time auctioneers who would sponsor or recommend them and they should be required to work as an apprentice at a minimum of four auctions before given a license if they have not graduated from an Auction College. It would not be a bad idea for all new auctioneers to do this at least after graduating. Speaking from experience, there is just a lot they do not know and that hurts the client and the rest of us.

By the way, I would like to commend Rosie at the Department of Licensing. She is very good, very efficient and helpful. I always appreciate her attitude. I have no complaints about her service. I hope you find someone else who does not perform their job and eliminate that expense. Rosie does a good job.

Although I've never reported an auction that I thought was illegal. I was reported once when a local auctioneer thought I was not licensed in this State. When I travel to another State to do an auction, I have no problem with paying a fee and applying for an auction license. It is only fair to the auctioneers who live there. Not having a license here makes it harder for us to do business where they do require a license.

I will be willing to answer any questions or testify further if I may be of use in making this decision. This legislation is not friendly to the legitimate auctioneers and does not benefit the citizens of the State. Please take the prudent and responsible action to recommend that ALL Auctioneers in the State of Washington be licensed, bonded and Insured. I'm sure no truly professional auctioneer will disagree, even if the license was to cost more.

Cordially,

Paul "Tiger" Baugh
Tiger Auctioneering