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Time to work harder & smarter: auctions present one of the greatest opportunities of our time

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Spring has sprung and if you are not a direct beneficiary of the stimulus package or about to receive an AIG bonus check then it is time to get serious about taking advantage of the current real estate market. In these troubled economic times it is necessary to work harder and smarter and auctions present one of the greatest opportunities of our time.

Analyze, strategize and prioritize but do not wait too long to take advantage of the current market. As a buyer, you are waiting on the sidelines uncertain about when to take the plunge. As a seller, you are patiently hoping for a turnaround while your holdings continue to diminish in value. The bottom line is that one really does not know when the recovery will begin. Sellers cannot afford to wait and buyers only win big when they make the acquisition before the upswing.

Accelerated and aggressive auction advertising campaigns create urgency and buyers are quickly realizing that these auction opportunities will not last forever. They are attending auctions more informed and better prepared to participate. Sellers are coming to the conclusion that auctions work and it just might be their best shot at moving on. They are intent on limiting their losses and avoiding continued maintenance, debt service, broker fees and other carrying costs. An increased number of buyers and sellers are turning to the auction method of sale with less trepidation, a greater comfort level and more confidence. As this trend continues, it will result in higher numbers of third party sales.

A couple months back, I penned an article for this publication encouraging people to take advantage of the current real estate market by buying and selling at auction.

I reviewed several types of auctions and will briefly highlight them here.

- * Foreclosure auctions are being conducted in record numbers. Watch for better values as lenders become more realistic.
- * Private owner sales are increasing in popularity as an alternative to the traditional "listing".
- * Municipal auctions create excellent buying opportunities as cities and towns seek ways to generate additional revenues.

As proof of the opportunities that exist and the results that have been attained, we can simply look at a handful of recent Massachusetts auctions.

A municipal auction of a 20,000 s/f commercial/office building for the city of Marlborough generated competitive bidding and a favorable outcome for the city.

A foreclosure auction of a bed and breakfast on Cape Cod resulted in a third party sale in excess of one million dollars.

A multi-property, private owner's auction, featuring two industrial building lots in Uxbridge and an industrial building in Bellingham resulted in the sale of all three properties.

A wide variety of properties are regularly being offered at auctions across New England. Whether you are looking to make your first acquisition of a multi-family home, acquire a subdivision, invest in commercial, office or industrial space, or seeking a condominium for your own use, auctions can provide you with outstanding investment options. Recently The Zekos Group had auctions scheduled for two business zoned properties in Northborough, multiple properties in Chelmsford and a partially finished water view home in Orleans. We are currently working on facilitating auctions of a premier eight lot subdivision in West Boylston and two office buildings on Rte. 9 in Southborough. As president of the Massachusetts Auctioneer's Association I am excited by the growth of our profession and I look forward to advancing the industry, informing the consumer and welcoming prospective buyers and sellers to embrace the auction method of marketing.

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