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### **Online Auction of Unclaimed Property Begins Today**

Helena – Today, the Montana Department of Revenue begins its auction of unclaimed safe deposit box contents. Items to be auctioned over the next several months include rare coins, jewelry, trinkets and other collectibles that banks and credit unions have held for more than five years and have turned over to the state.

The department has contracted Lone Star Auctioneers, an online auction company, to conduct the auction. You can view the auction items and register to bid on them at [MontanaUnclaimedProperty.org](http://MontanaUnclaimedProperty.org).

Every two weeks a new collection of items will be up for auction. Bidding for each collection will terminate at the end of the two-week period. Lone Star will notify bidders if they have bid successfully on any of the items. Though there's no charge for bidding on an item, successful bidders will be charged a buyer's fee of 10% of the purchase price.

“We have a rich and varied collection of items up for auction,” says Jim McKeon, Unclaimed Property Program Manager. “I think it will pique the interest of serious and casual collectors alike.”

The department makes every effort to contact the original owners of the safe deposit box contents before auctioning it. If the property is sold, the state will hold the net proceeds from the auction until the rightful owners of the property or their heirs can claim their portion.

Anyone who believes the state may be holding their property can easily check by using Click for Cash, an online search engine for unclaimed property. You can access Click for Cash by visiting [revenue.mt.gov](http://revenue.mt.gov) and clicking on “Find Your Unclaimed Property.” You can also have the Department of Revenue do a search for you by emailing [unclaimedproperty@mt.gov](mailto:unclaimedproperty@mt.gov) or by calling the department toll free at (866) 859-2254 (in Helena, 444-6900).

Each year millions of dollars go unclaimed in Montana. In the last year, the department received more than \$11 million from businesses or other holders of unclaimed property. The department processed just under 600 claims and returned more than \$4.5 million to owners. Unclaimed property can include uncashed payroll checks, state refunds, utility deposits, interest or dividend income, savings and checking accounts, safe-deposit box contents, credit balances, gift cards, and stocks and bonds.

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