



Katie O'Neill/The Eureka Reporter

The second round of online bidding for the town of Bridgeville is expected to start at \$1.75 million.

For sale

by Heather Muller, 3/20/2006

The tiny Humboldt County town made famous for being the first-ever auctioned on eBay will soon be up for sale again.

Laguna Hills financial advisor Bruce Krall, who bought the town in 2004, announced Friday that he plans to list Bridgeville next month — again on eBay.

But interested buyers can expect to shell out more than a million additional dollars for the town this time around. After paying a reported \$700,000 to the Lapple family in 2004, Krall plans to start the bidding at a robust \$1.75 million.

The sale, which will be managed by the Kompolt Online Auction Agency in San Luis Obispo, is expected to begin April 4.

A listing notification on eBay says the sale will include 83 acres of riverfront property, seven houses currently used as rentals, one main house on 1.6 acres “with spectacular views,” a vacant machine shop, a vacant café and a functioning post office that has been in operation since 1870.

“Not far from Bridgeville, you will find a variety of intriguing tourist attractions such as the Humboldt Redwoods State Park, the historic seaport town of Eureka, the rugged Lost Coast of Humboldt County and the charming rural town of Ferndale, as well as Ruth Lake, Mount Shasta and Lake Shasta,” the Web site reads.

The notification includes a quote from Krall that reads, “We have put our heart and soul into refurbishing this town with the hopes of residing there one day. However, due to personal family concerns we now need to stay in Southern California for the foreseeable future.”

Bridgeville became something of a household name in December 2002, when the town was put on the electronic

auction block with an asking price of \$775,000.

International media attention sparked a bidding war, which in turn attracted even more media attention. Bidding began at a modest \$5,000, but seconds before the auction closed, after an estimated 250 bids, the price reached \$1,777,877. News outlets from as far away as Africa celebrated the first town ever sold on eBay.

But while the auction closed, the deal did not. The highest bidder backed out without even looking at the property, and one by one each of the lower bids fell through. Krall bought the place almost two years later through a traditional real estate listing, and the town still celebrated as the first ever sold on eBay never was sold on eBay — or at least not yet.

Krall told the Associated Press that he had made “multiple hundreds of thousands of dollars” of improvements to the town, including restoring old buildings, removing dilapidated structures and cleaning up mounds of garbage. The AP also reported that he had found new tenants for the houses and received a conditional use permit for a riverfront resort.

A few of the estimated 20 townspeople expressed mixed opinions Sunday of the changes Krall has made. Seventeen-year-old Jennifer Cirrincione, who said she has lived in Bridgeville for a year, hopes “the new owner will make Bridgeville a nicer place to live.” She said a store and some basic maintenance work were badly needed.

Angelo and Sharon Batini listed the town of Carlotta on eBay in 2005. The experience, Sharon said, was interesting. “Very interesting. We’re glad it didn’t sell, because (Angelo) was not in a good mood when he decided to sell, and he listed it for too little.”

Sharon reported receiving in the vicinity of 35,000 hits on eBay — “but only one bid,” she said. “A lot of people looking.”

Krall’s choice of Kompolt to handle the auction may make a difference in the outcome. Ecommerce-Guide described the auction house as a “power seller” that used only 10 employees to generate more than \$7 million in sales for various high-profile clients since 2001.

Past clients include Toyota, Hewlett-Packard, Martha Stewart Television, Intel, Home Depot and NBC, according to Ecommerce-Guide. Jenny Kompolt, the agency’s founder, formerly worked for eBay.

The Bridgeville auction redux appears to be off to a good start. With the opening of the auction still two weeks away, the eBay listing has already registered almost 50,000 hits.