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Airport's lost and found property up for auction

Nov. 3, 2011 -- A diamond ring, David Yurman bracelet, Chanel sunglasses, Mont Blanc pen and American Indian head ring are among the items abandoned at Tampa International Airport now up for auction at govdeals.com.

The auction runs until Nov. 14, with bids on items closing between 6:30 and 8:30 p.m.

"They're items lost and abandoned on airport property," said Mitchell Thrower, Hillsborough County Aviation Authority's Deputy Director of Administration.

It's the fourth online auction conducted by the airport. Three held earlier this year generated nearly \$40,000, which went into the airport's general fund. This auction started Oct. 31, and some good deals are still available. A yellow gold bracelet with 26 diamonds, appraised at \$7,900, was going for \$2,100 at this writing. A platinum ring with four diamonds, appraised at \$7,200, is going now for \$1,052.

The airport finds about 1,000 abandoned items each month, and about 20 percent are claimed by owners. State law requires the airport to keep lost property for 30 days, but Thrower said the airport waits longer before putting items up for sale. "Our objective is to return the items to their owners," Thrower said.

Jewelry dominates the offerings in the current auction, but past sales have featured some unusual items, including an artificial limb, chandelier, baby beauty pageant crown, and cow lawn ornament.

To bid on an item, go to govdeals.com and search for Hillsborough County Aviation Authority. Payments can be made using cash, credit card (MasterCard or Visa), money order and cashier's check.

The Aviation Authority began in 1945 as an independent special district governed by the Hillsborough County Aviation Authority Act. The act provides the Authority with exclusive jurisdiction, control, supervision, and management over all public airports in Hillsborough County. Although empowered to levy ad valorem property taxes, the authority has not collected any tax funds since 1973. Recognized as an industry leader in efficiency and convenience, Tampa International Airport continues to earn the most prestigious awards and honors and ranks among the top airports in the United States. With 200 daily departures and service to over 70 nonstop destinations, Tampa International Airport is the Gateway to Florida's West Coast and your next great vacation.