

## CONVENIENCE

# New ezbay store takes fear, hassle out of eBay

By Zandy Dudiak

Staff writer

**A**ndy Benson has opened a different kind of "convenience" store in Murrysville. The 29-year-old entrepreneur is hoping customers find his new business, ezbay store, an easy way to turn their unwanted items into cash.

The store, a registered eBay trading assistant, is one of the first to jump on an innovative concept that's just beginning to take root nationwide.

And it's something Benson hopes to eventually turn into a franchise business.

What his store does is take the fear and hassle out of using eBay, the world's largest online auction site.

"It's definitely an amazing marketplace," says Benson. "You're selling to the world instead of your own backyard."

But some people find eBay a bit daunting.

"There's some fear of putting personal information online," Benson says.

Among the concerns sellers have are identity theft and whether they'll actually get paid for their items once the bidding is closed.

"We assume the whole risk," Benson says, adding nothing leaves the store until the money comes through.

"But mostly it's the convenience. People are so busy in their lives."

Benson's background is in advertising, sales and marketing. A few years ago, he started using eBay to sell his personal items, such as Steelers memorabilia and computer/stereo components, then realized it might be a way to fulfill his dream of having his own business.



**ANDY BENSON, owner of the new ezbay store in Murrysville, is ready to help customers turn unwanted items into cash.**

The service provided by the ezbay store requires little effort on the part of the seller. All the customer has to do is bring the items to the store for a free, pre-sale evaluation.

The only requirements are items have an estimated value of \$25 or more, weigh less than 150 pounds and measure less than 130 inches in combined length and girth. Benson says special arrangements can be made for pickup of large pieces such as industrial equipment, antique furniture and vehicles.

The items are researched for sale value and a high-quality digital photograph is taken to accompany the professionally-written ad copy provided by the store. When the sale is complete, each

item is packed with care to prevent breakage during shipment.

Sellers are able to access the store's Web site, [www.ezbaystores.com](http://www.ezbaystores.com), to track the auction without having to navigate through eBay's more complicated Web site.

"Hopefully the next time they hear from us is when they get their check in the mailbox," Benson says.

During his first month in business, Benson has found a number of his customers are in the 50-plus age group, many of them baby boomers looking to downsize or people liquidating items from their parents' estate.

Benson says American homes have an average of \$2,500 worth of unused

items, which can be turned into cash through eBay.

Among items sold at the online auction site are antiques, collectibles, designer clothing and accessories, electronics, computers, housewares, appliances, event tickets, jewelry, musical instruments, sports equipment/memorabilia and vehicle parts and accessories.

Businesses can also benefit from ezbay store's convenience to get rid of excess inventory and overstock, new or used equipment, returns or damaged goods and sample items.

Benson says as long as it's an item legal to sell on eBay, the ezbay store can handle the sale. The commission for the store is 33 percent of the first \$499 of sale value and 23 percent on the amount over \$500.

Although the store has been open only one month, Benson has already sold some interesting items for customers, including a license to purchase seats for Steelers games.

The store also offers fund-raising opportunities for schools and organizations. After registering, groups can pass out fliers encouraging people to bring donated items to the store. Proceeds from sales benefit the organization.

An Erie native and graduate of Edinboro University, Benson moved with his parents to Murrysville six years ago. He chose to locate the store in the Shop 'N Save Plaza on Route 22.

"Murrysville's the type of community I think we'll do well in."

Store hours are 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday. The store is closed Sundays.