



Kyle Shobe

- 36-years-old
- Lewistown, Mont.
- United Country Shobe Auction & Realty

Education: University of Wyoming, ag business degree and Western College of Auctioneering

Background: Shobe grew up in the auction business learning from his father and taking his chance at the mic to sell when he was 5-years-old. He has never stopped auctioneering – conducting everything from purebred cattle sales to estate auctions. Shobe is also an accomplished rodeo announcer.

Family: Wife, Jodie, and children, McKay, 10; Hadlee, 8; Tessa, 5; and Millie, 2

Honors: The 2010 World Livestock Auctioneer Champion

The Walk ‘Em Boys: Shobe and his country dance band, the Walk ‘Em Boys, can be found at county fairs, conventions and community events playing their original music and time-tested covers. The band will be in Nashville this fall to work on their second album.

Family Time: The auction and rodeo announcing business can be a family affair, which Shobe is so thankful for. “When you enjoy what you do for a living and getting to do some of the cool things that go with the job, you don’t need a lot of time off. We enjoy our downtime together, but we also enjoy the time we get to work together.”

Motivation: The key to motivation? “Forward motion,” Shobe says frankly. “If you’re always moving forward, you can’t help but be motivated.”

Calling the **BID**

By Codi Vallery-Mills

On a hot July day Kyle Shobe travels home from the Cheyenne Frontier Days, where he has just spent 10 days helping announce the rodeo action, to his home in Lewistown, Mont. It’s during this travel – with patchy cell phone reception and all – that he gives comment to his auctioneering business and Top 10 honor.

Shobe has been an auctioneer since he was 5, with the blessing of his father who founded Shobe Auction & Realty in 1981. “He always let me have some time at the end of a sale to call a few bids. He didn’t have to do that, but he did,” Shobe says fondly. “I was blessed to have the childhood I did.”

So here was a kid with a microphone, and soon Shobe was known for his ease talking in front of an audience. In junior high he began to call rodeo action and continue with auctioneering. He later would go on to be named world champion auctioneer by the Livestock Marketing Association in 2010. Today, he serves as an instructor for his alma mater – Western College of Auctioneering – and sells cattle sales in Lewistown, Sidney and Glasgow.

With the mentorship of rodeo announcer Justin McKee and Jim Thompson he has continued to announce a few rodeos a year. Auctioneer friends John Korrey, Mike Nuss, Larry Schnell and Lyle Allen have inspired him to push forward in his auctioneer career. Shobe has begun building a purebred seedstock customer base that utilizes him for their production sales. “It’s been a slow process, as producers tend to get an auctioneer and stick with him. It’s taken a lot of road trips, phone calls and perseverance to build that customer base. I feel fortunate to work the sales I do,” Shobe says.

His sales encompass various breeds. “Being an auctioneer is fascinating. You get to work with different producers in different breeds, see their similarities and differences, and that’s what makes the world go round I think.”

He strives to know the cattle, their value and the programs each of his clients have. In addition,

he believes strongly in the auction way of selling cattle.

“An auctioneer creates an atmosphere of competition. When he looks across the block into the eyes of someone and asks for one more bid... to read a crowd, of who is interested and who isn’t... I don’t think you can replace it,” he says.

Shobe appreciates the other aspect of live bull sales – the socializing. “We don’t have the dances or card parties like we once did, but people are still hungry to get together. Internet sales can’t bring the social aspect of a live sale.”

The Teacher

As a teacher of auctioneering, he wants students of Western College to have a certain sound. A chant that can be recognized. One that has clarity and rhythm to it while being easy to understand.

Above all that though, he wants his students to remember to always be genuine and real. Shobe says it can be easy to get behind a microphone and become someone you are not. He tells his students to treat each bid, each sale, as if you were talking one on one with someone.

He also drives home product knowledge. Whether it be a household item or a top dollar bull, Shobe says there is “extreme power in knowing the value of what you are selling.”

“You can’t get on an auction block weekly and sell cattle without knowing what value those cattle should bring. In a registered sale, I get to know the sellers, their program, the cattle traits, the pedigrees and the environment they are raised in. It’s something you have to learn,” Shobe says.

He says representing the seller is a big mantle to carry, especially in the cattle industry where sale day is often also the yearly payday. Shobe doesn’t keep stats on the number of cattle he has sold. Instead he remembers the people. “For the majority of these sales, the relationship goes considerably deeper than ‘just’ being an auctioneer.”

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