

## Presidential installation to highlight 30th anniversary celebration

**B**oise State will host a dual celebration in February featuring the installation of President Bob Kustra on Feb. 27 and observing its 30th anniversary as a university with a week of events and activities.

Founded in 1932 as a junior college, Boise State became a four-year school in 1965, moved into the state higher education system in 1969, and became a university in February 1974.

Several university-related events will lead up to the installation and anniversary celebration, and campus and community members are invited to join in.

Feb. 21 — Service Saturday, where participants tackle three to four community service projects throughout Boise. Sponsored and coordinated by the Volunteer Services Board.

Feb. 21 — The International Food, Song and Dance Festival, an evening of performances and ethnic food from around the world. This annual event is sponsored by the International Student Association.

Feb. 26 — The 15th annual Leadership Quest, sponsored by Student Union and Activities and the LEADS program.

Feb. 27 — Presidential installation.

Feb. 27 — Third annual Women Making History Reception, recognizing 25 outstanding women. Sponsored by the Boise State Women's Center.

Feb. 28 — Step Afrika, an African American dance program. Sponsored by Student Programs Board.

Also that week, the Student Union Gallery will feature the National Women's Juried Art Show in observance of Women's History Month in March.

For a detailed listing of what's happening on campus, visit [entertainment.boisestate.edu](http://entertainment.boisestate.edu).

# Kustra jumps right in, gets to

BY LARRY BURKE

**B**oise State's newest Bronco has joined the herd with the energy of a spirited colt and the aggressiveness of a protective stallion.

To wit: After only four months on the job, President Bob Kustra has received approval to begin a feasibility study to construct a new classroom building and a student services center as well as for a luxury suite/press box addition to Bronco Stadium. In addition, he has issued a bold invitation to Idaho State to locate its health science

programs in a new building on Boise State's campus. So much for the "get-acquainted" phase that marks the initial months of most college presidents.

Not that Kustra hasn't been doing plenty of that, too. His car's odometer was spinning at top speed over the summer as he crisscrossed the state to build relationships with his new constituencies.

Find someone to listen and he was there, from individual visits with key decision-makers to speeches to Boise's major civic organizations and meetings with the media. Kustra's people skills and speaking abilities have already earned him favorable reviews, including those from directors of two of Idaho's largest business organizations

"He is an amazingly quick study," says Nancy Vannorsdel, director of the Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce. "He has a

good grasp of what the challenges and opportunities are and asks very penetrating questions. He is very attuned to the synergy between the business community and the university. He gets that connection, and that's what we need."

Adds Steve Ahrens, director of the Idaho Association of Commerce and Industry: "Dr. Kustra hit the ground running at 100 miles an hour. He envisions Boise State as an urban research institution, which holds wonderful opportunities for Boise and Idaho. His vision for Boise State is dramatically different than the college's past history and points a clear direction for elevating Boise State to a new role in Idaho higher education."

In his early visits and speeches, Kustra has delivered a pointed message that touts the value of Boise State, yet also outlines the issues facing the school as it continues to experience a booming demand for its services. And he doesn't back away from talking about some of the toughest challenges facing Idaho's higher education system: equity funding for Boise State, low faculty salaries and a dwindling share of the state revenue pie.

"I'm really anxious to speak on these issues and see if we can get some support under the dome," says Kustra. "The challenge is to develop a statewide focus on Boise State as the institution of promise when it comes to growth and development. What the state's political leadership and its business community have to understand is that Boise State, by virtue of being embedded in this growing metropolitan region, is the future of this state.



Boise State's new president has made the rounds as a public speaker on behalf of the university.

# work at new job

"It is going to experience substantial growth and development and is going to be a premier metropolitan research university. How quickly it becomes that depends on how much the political leadership in this state wants to stand up front and square to advocate for this institution."

Kustra's academic agenda has focused on Boise State's transition into an "urban research university" that utilizes its metropolitan setting more effectively than it has in the past. A new Institute for Urban and Regional Planning is an early reflection of that concept. A master's degree program in regional and urban planning is soon to follow.

"This new research thrust draws connections to every part of the community and draws those connections back to every discipline," says Kustra. "In every college you are going to have some application of the general principle, which is to connect this university with every aspect of this community."

"We need to provide more incentives for research and build more graduate programs. We need to hire more faculty who have teaching and research agendas and develop an executive MBA [program]."

"And we must reconcile the need for the Treasure Valley to educate students of all abilities and aptitudes while at the same time carving out a place for Boise State to be a research university with higher academic standards," he continues. "Those two just don't go together. Everybody on this campus knows it and everybody would like to come up with a solution. Of course, the solution requires money; it requires political will and some leadership."

And what are the new president's first impressions?

"There's a very positive feeling on the campus about this particular moment in Boise State's future," says Kustra.

"Of course, everybody is feeling the effects of no salary increases going into our third year. On the other hand, they realize there is no way that can change unless we mobilize in some fashion — find a way to tell Boise State's story even more effectively — find a way to connect the campus to this city and state in more effective ways."

"No matter where I turn, I find a willingness for people to jump in."

## Radio show offers new horizons

New President Bob Kustra is getting the word out in several ways — including on the airwaves of NPR News 91, the university's National Public Radio-affiliated station.

Starting in August, NPR News 91 began airing *New Horizons in Education*, a 30-minute interview show hosted by Kustra. Aired each Friday at 3:30 p.m. (Mountain Time), *New Horizons* features guests from a variety of backgrounds and areas of expertise.

Kustra's guests have included newsmakers, dignitaries, authors and educators discussing important issues of the day. "The goal is high-quality, interesting radio," says Kustra. "But the most important outcome, I hope, will be to showcase Boise State in yet another venue as a metropolitan research university of distinction, and to enhance our reputational currency."

Kustra is an experienced broadcaster, having hosted his own program at Eastern Kentucky University, where he previously served as president. Prior to that, he declined an offer to host an afternoon talk show on WLS in Chicago, where he was serving as Illinois' lieutenant governor.

"At NPR News 91, we had been talking about a local talk program for some time," says program director Jim East. "But finding the right host kept us from going forward. After Dr. Kustra was named president of BSU, we were delighted when he agreed to continue what he had done at Eastern Kentucky. He's an excellent communicator and provides a lively forum for the people and issues that impact Idahoans."

NPR News 91 is a service of Boise State Radio and Boise State. It is heard on KBSX, 91.5 FM Boise; KBSY, 88.5 FM Burley; KBSJ, 91.3 FM Jackpot, Nev.; and KBSQ, 90.7 FM McCall.

Additional information about *New Horizons in Education* is available online at [radio.boisestate.edu/stations/npr/NewHorizons.asp](http://radio.boisestate.edu/stations/npr/NewHorizons.asp).

—Bob Evancho



Bob Kustra interviews Boise State alum and novelist Everardo Torrez.