

## Boise State purchases landmark hotel

The intersection of Capitol Boulevard and University Drive, which serves as the main entryway for vehicles entering the west side of Boise State's campus, will someday have a much different look.

That's because in June the university purchased University Inn, the well-known hotel located on the northeast side of that busy corner that borders Boise State's campus. The property is earmarked as the future site of a new College of Business



Above: University Inn. Below: Work continues on the Interactive Learning Center.

MELISSA HARRIS

and Economics building, which will be part of a pedestrian-friendly passageway into the heart of the main campus ("2005 master plan calls for future campus expansion," *FOCUS*, Fall 2005).

"This important acquisition will allow Boise State to continue its long-range Campus Master Plan to make the intersection of University Drive and Capitol Boulevard a scenic gateway onto our campus, highlighted by a state-of-the-art College of Business and Economics building," says President Bob Kustra.

As part of the \$3.2 million purchase of the 1.8-acre site, University Inn will remain in business through Oct. 31. During the interim period, seller Phil

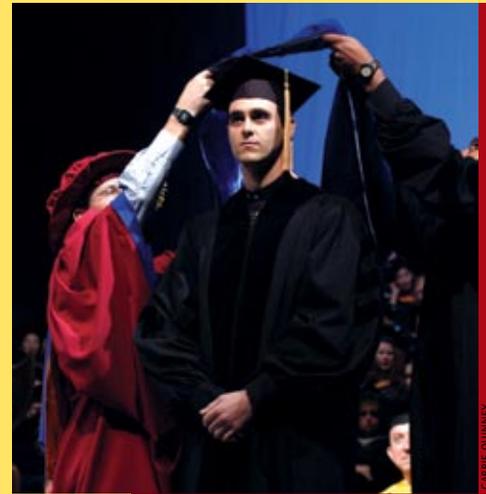
Murelaga will continue to operate the hotel through a lease with Boise State. Funds are currently being raised for the five-story Business and Economics building that will span more than 100,000 square feet. Until construction

on the new building begins — which will probably take two to three years — the short-term plan is to remodel parts of University Inn and use it for offices and possibly student housing.

The College of Business and Economics building plans include an atrium and commons lounge; a food court; a financial trading room; a 200-person auditorium; a student services center; space to house the wide variety of professional services and programs that Boise State offers the business community; numerous specialized, high-tech classrooms; a graduate student research facility; a business start-up incubator center and more.

University Inn was built in 1957 as the Thunderbird Lodge, with major additions in 1962. It became a Ramada Inn in the late 1960s and then University Inn in 1982. Many remodels and updates were made during Murelaga's 30-year ownership. A plaque will be installed in the new business building to commemorate the historical location of University Inn.

Meanwhile, Boise State's current major construction project, the \$14 million Interactive Learning Center, continues on schedule and is due for completion in June 2007. In addition, the university is in the planning phase on the expansion and renovation of the Student Union and the building of a new student health, wellness and counseling center and a second parking structure, both of which will be located near the Student Union and Student Recreation Center.



CARRIE QUINNEY

Oldenborger is hooded during May Commencement.

## First Ph.D. awarded at spring commencement

Boise State reached another milestone when it awarded its first Ph.D., a doctorate in geophysics, at the university's spring 2006 Commencement.

Greg Oldenborger of Vancouver, B.C., received his Ph.D. in geophysics, one of four doctoral programs now offered by the university, during the May 13 ceremonies in Taco Bell Arena. He will continue his research in the area of electrical and electromagnetic geophysics at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver.

Approximately 1,100 graduates attended the ceremony. In all, 1,653 students qualified to earn 1,722 degrees since the December Commencement, including three doctoral degrees and 236 master's degrees. A total of 397 students graduated with honors.

Ralph R. Peterson, a 1965 Boise Junior College alumnus, was presented with Boise State's fourth honorary doctorate. Peterson is chairman, president and CEO of CH2M Hill, a global project delivery company based in Denver.

Peterson has earned praise for his company's role in promoting the environment through its cleanup work and other environment-related projects.

Twin graduates Josie and Texie Evans were this year's student speakers. The sisters have traveled to France, Costa Rica and Chile. Josie added a study program in Spain this summer. Their speech focused on diversity and unity on campus.



JOHN KELLY