## Support from the State

By Amy Stahl

ust imagine you're a Boise State researcher with a brilliant idea. Where do you go for funds? Your ship could come in and you could win a six-figure National Science Foundation grant, Or you could look to several sources available within Idabo.

At BSU, faculty members can compete for a limited number of university grants of up to \$5,000. Tenure track faculty also can receive release time equivalent to two courses per academic year or money for travel and publication support.

The State Board of Education also provides funding on several tracks awarded through the Higher Education Resource Council (HERC) chaired by Carol Martin, BSU's associate vice president for academic affairs. The eightmember group was created in 1988 with equal representation from BSU, Idaho State, Lewis-Clark State College and the University of Idaho plus four members of the public.

HERC, which receives about \$2.1 million annually from the Legislature, reviews proposals from Idaho faculty members and makes recommendations on funding to the State Board of Education.

Funding is available for infrastructure support, specific research grant programs and state-supported research centers and matching grants. A program for matching grants was suspended in 1993 for lack of funds.

About \$600,000 is earmarked annually for infrastructure support, which can include dollars to pay graduate assistants, support staff or visiting research faculty. The formula for distribution of funds is: BSU, 25 percent; ISU, 25 percent; U of 1, 40 percent; and LCSC, 10 percent.

The specific research grant program



As chair of HERC, Martin oversees a statewide group that reviews grant requests.

awards grants to individuals or groups of up to \$35,000 annually.

Faculty from each school submit proposals, which are rated by national experts in each discipline. "It's a very even-handed distribution of funds based on the merit of the proposals," Martin Says,

BSU winners have included Jon Dayley, a linguist who wrote a dictionary of Guatemalan languages; geosciences professor Charles Waag for a study of sinkhole-like depressions formed by eruptions after the Borah Peak earthquake and other earthquakes; chemistry professor Clifford LeMaster to design a new method for understanding the complexity of molecules; and marketing /finance professor Mohan Limaye to develop a system that will help American business managers become more sensitive to the

world view of Asian workers.

The state-supported research centers are the most competitive — and prestigious — of the HERC programs. Idaho's three universities and Lewis-Clark State College can compete every three years for grants of up to \$1.5 million. The intent, says Martin, "is to build a center to a state of national competitiveness in order to continue research and have it be self-supported by national grants."

BSU won a three-year grant in 1993 for the Center for Geophysical Investigation of the Shallow Subsurface (CGISS). The center, which is directed by geosciences professor Jack Pelton, has been involved in 18 significant research projects involving groundwater geology, seismic hazards and marine geophysics. To date CGISS has generated more than \$2 million from external contracts and grants.