

Student seeking furniture buys 95-year-old hotel

By Mark Willy

Many college students go to auctions to pick up low-cost furniture. UNL senior Rick Alexander was one of these, but he wound up with something else—a 24-room hotel for \$3,000.

Alexander went to an auction this summer in his hometown, Superior, to buy an old velvet couch. The seller wanted five dollars which Alexander said he didn't think it was worth. He stayed anyway and left the new owner of Superior's Union Hotel.

Bids for the hotel started at \$2,500, and Alexander said he became interested. He made the top bid, took out a loan and paid

owner Maurice Kilgore \$3,000 for the hotel and all of its antique furnishings, he said.

Since then word of Alexander's deal has spread and he has received numerous offers to sell the hotel for a substantial profit, he said. He even received an offer from Kilgore, who seemed to regret his decision, to sell it at that price, he said.

Hold onto it
 "I'm going to hold onto it at least for awhile," Alexander said. "I feel it's a good experience to run your own business. It will help me establish credit, which is hard for a student to do. As far as keeping it after this year, I'll wait and see if I get into law school. If I do then I'll probably sell it."

The hotel was built 95 years ago with bricks from a Superior factory. Railroaders were steady customers during its peak years. Alexander has four tenants now who are renting from him monthly. He said he plans to rent rooms at \$4 a night.

Most of the rooms contain a bed, dresser and table, although some include a refrigerator and stove. Alexander said he plans to clean the hotel, paint and repair the roof.

Business space

Businesses also lease space in the hotel. A room on the first floor is rented to Higer's Recreation Room. Alexander has

been contacted by owners of a gun shop and an antique shop who may want to rent space, he said.

He plans to have two employees: a woman who cleaned the hotel for Kilgore will remain as maid and a retired friend of the Alexander family will run the desk. They will operate the hotel while he is at school, he said.

Alexander said he has been surprised at the commotion caused by his buying the hotel.

"It's been kind of a headache," he said. "I didn't realize it would cause all this publicity."

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