

New hotel comes to S.F.

Despite economic slowdown, officials say tourism industry still booming in The City

By Lee Hubbard
Special to The Examiner

The first hotel to be built in San Francisco in three years will have its grand opening today.

The Intercontinental Hotel at Howard and Fifth streets, a four-star hotel directly next to the Moscone Center West Convention Center, is the first new hotel since the 2005 opening of the St. Regis Hotel, according to the San Francisco Convention and Visitors Bureau.

At 550 rooms, it is also the largest to open in The City since the Marriott hotel in 1989, according to Wendy Cole, senior sales manager of the Intercontinental Hotel.

The opening comes at a time when the U.S. economy is slowing down. But, according to Tanya Houseman, public relations manager with the Convention and Visitors Bureau, travel to San Francisco is doing well.

"The hotel market is doing pretty well," she said. "We have seen an increase in occupancy and the average daily rate."

"San Francisco is having a great year with citywide conventions, as they have over 900,000 rooms booked for the year," said Gail Gerber, director of sales and marketing at the Intercontinental Hotel. "We are opening at a perfect time."

Intercontinental San Francisco will employ 400 people, and includes a restaurant, indoor pool, restaurant and bar, banquet rooms, a workout facility and full day spa. There is no self parking, but there is 24-hour full-service valet parking.

Standard room rates at the Intercontinental will fluctuate from the low \$200s up to \$400, according to Cole.

The 32-floor building has only 25 floors with hotel rooms, with 22 rooms on each floor.

A standard room includes a king-size bed, 42-inch



Intercontinental San Francisco spruces up for its grand opening.

— Jason Steinberg/
Special to The Examiner

flat-screen televisions, wireless Internet access, iPod docking stations and motion sensors to determine whether someone is in the room.

Construction on the Intercontinental Hotel took more than two and a half years. Other hotels to open in recent years include the St. Regis Hotel on Third and Mission and the 2003 opening of the Hotel Vitale on Spear Street.