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**Former eyesore becomes downtown gem**

A once aging concrete parking structure at the center of Tacoma's downtown has undergone a makeover by Tacoma-based BLRB Architects that the firm hopes will not only spark discussions about design standards but about environmental stewardship.

“We wanted to put our money where our mouth is," Principal Tom Bates said. "We hope that it gets people thinking about sustainability and their own carbon footprint."

BLRB is moving its offices into the facility at the corner of 13th and Pacific Avenue starting on Monday, not only as a way to showcase the firm's practice of finding ways to revitalize rather than replace existing structure, but to also be another spark in the city's effort of building a strong, vibrant downtown, Bates said.

The firm won the contract to rehabilitate the structure two and a half years ago when City of Tacoma officials sought ways to revitalize the municipal parking garage into someplace more than a gathering of parking stalls.

The Pacific Plaza complex, the first LEED Platinum office building in Tacoma, is a public/private partnership between the City of Tacoma and BLRB Architects. Renovated to replace the outdated Park Plaza South parking garage, the new building now features street-level retail and Class A office space and a three-level parking garage.