

Project gives downtown building exteriors a second look

Puyallup Main Street Association

College students wandering through Downtown Puyallup, looking up at the buildings and taking pictures are not lost.

They are graduate students from the University of Washington School of Architecture participating in the "Storefront Studio" project.

Over the next few months, downtown denizens may see UW Professor Jim Nicholls or Student Project Leader Sam McPhetes guiding small groups peering, pointing and sketching on clipboards. The program looks at the exterior of Puyallup's downtown buildings and proposes designs to return them to their original appearance.

The designs, along with needed technical data, are provided at no cost to property owners.

Programs such as "Storefront Studio" are often the first step in a focused façade improvement effort. The ultimate intent is to remove much of the "remuddling" that has been done to historic old buildings in downtown business districts, preserving the character and culture of the town.

The design and façade improvement phases are coordinated to keep risk and cost to the property owner at a minimum, while igniting maximum private investment in the Central Business District.

A similar program in Centralia saw nearly \$5 million in private investment that resulted from \$157,000 in façade grants



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University of Washington School of Architecture graduate students will look at downtown Puyallup buildings and come up with new designs for improvement.

distributed among 22 property owners in Centralia's historic central business district.

Over a period of four years, 13 vacant buildings were converted for commercial uses.

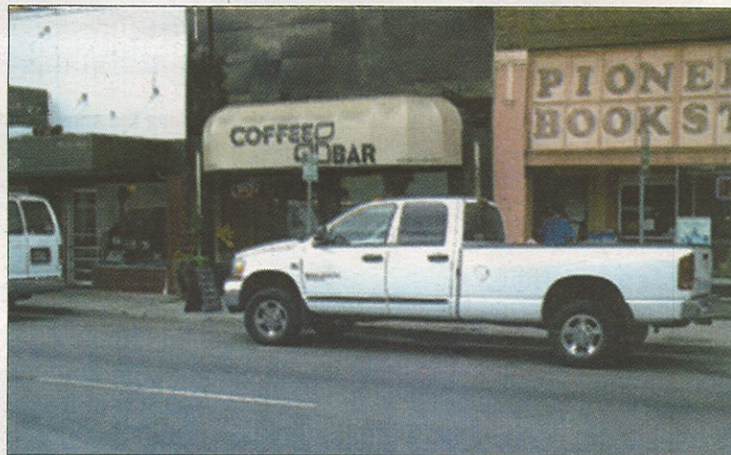
Puyallup Main Street Executive Director Dave Eatwell is currently pursuing grant funds to support the matching grant program that will allow property owners to move into the construction phase.

Before coming to Puyallup, the graduate students com-

pleted similar projects in the cities of Des Moines and Carnation.

Under the management of the Puyallup Main Street Association, the Storefront Studio program in Puyallup is funded by grants from the City of Puyallup and Pierce County's economic development efforts spear-headed by Calvin Goings.

The design phase of the program should be completed by March 15, 2008.



Student Project Leader Sam McPhetes will help guide University of Washington School of Architecture graduate students through downtown Puyallup for the "Storefront Studio" project.
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