

LAW WEEK COLORADO

IP Office Set To Open This Month

By **Tony Flesor**
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THE U.S. PATENT and Trademark satellite office set to open in Denver this summer will focus on making the patent process more accessible to the public.

Kilpatrick Townsend partner Tom Franklin has been a key part of bringing the satellite office to Denver. Over the past decade, Denver has become an even more desirable location for the office, and with its opening imminent, the office is setting up programs to promote its new location.

The office is set to open June 30 with a grand opening gala and local celebration planned to coincide with the opening.

As part of the transition from the current setup, with the Denver satellite in a temporary location, to its permanent location in the Byron Rogers building in downtown Denver, the office is looking to fill new positions. Franklin said the office is expected to increase its patent judge staff from 12 to 20 and will add 50 patent examiners to fill 100 slots.

Franklin said he's been working on convincing the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office to open a satellite in Denver for about 10 years.

"Prior to us landing an office, from the perspective of my profession, Colorado was a fly-over state," Franklin said. "We had great firms in town, had great patent attorneys, but we didn't have the depth of the business community that some other areas have. Having the office puts us on the map."

U.S. Sen. Michael Bennet, who coordinated the effort to bring the office to Colorado, said the office will be a boon to the region. "It's a milestone moment that will boost Colorado's innovation economy and benefit the entire Rocky Mountain region," he said in a press release.

Although it wasn't a factor at the start of the process of choosing a location, the Front Range startup community is helpful. As a headquarters for the region, Colorado now stands out as more significant.

Franklin said the locations for the five satellite offices were guided into areas



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where they could attract workers for the USPTO.

He said the patent office was essentially working as one company trying to hire 1,000 people every year — all from Washington, D.C.

As a result, the office started a search for regional satellites. There are other offices in Washington, D.C., Detroit, Dallas, and San Jose, California.

"From a hiring perspective, they're completely different hiring pools," Franklin said. "People tend to stay in their region."

He said the other reason for the patent office to move into other regions is to provide outreach into local communities. He said there's a need in Colorado for companies to understand the importance of IP because of its growing economy.

The grand opening gala is one way to increase public outreach. The event will include a CLE to coincide with the office opening, and the office is anticipating about 750 in attendance.

Another is in a women's symposium that was held last weekend at the University of Denver. The event was planned to offer networking opportunities with experts in IP, government and industry representatives and for women entrepreneurs to gain knowledge in all parts of the business cycle, such as financing, licensing, marketing and protecting IP assets.

Though the Denver symposium has passed, Franklin said there are other opportunities to see the program in neighboring states, and the new patent office will have other outreach events and resources.

"For some reason, women are

underrepresented in the patent ranks," Franklin said. "We're trying to make the patent process more approachable."

He said the underrepresentation of women in patents is a problem that everyone should be aware of, and acknowledging the problem is the first step toward fixing it.

"I don't know if it's male ego or what it is, but at the end of the day, to have a significant part of the population underrepresented, that's important," Franklin said.

Franklin said the event was driven by Mollybeth Kocalski, patent counsel for Oracle. He also said it wouldn't have been possible to bring the patent office to Denver without the work of Bennet. •

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