

## The Denver Business Journal: 2012 Power Book

# John Posthumus helped Denver land new patent office

Winner - Law

[Heather Draper](#)

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Getting attorney [John Posthumus](#), a shareholder at Denver-based Sheridan Ross PC, to talk about himself isn't easy.

The intellectual property attorney was key in Denver's successful push to land a regional [U.S. Patent and Trademark Office](#) (USPTO), which is forecast to have a \$440 million economic impact on the state in the first five years it's open.



Kathleen Lavine | Denver Business Journal

*John Posthumus, shareholder with Denver-based Sheridan Ross PC, says, "A coalition of folks worked on our submission to the [U.S. Patent and Trademark Office]."*

Posthumus put in more than 1,000 pro bono hours on the patent office project, which resulted in the USPTO's July 1 announcement that Denver was picked for a satellite office, along with Dallas and San Jose, Calif.

The office, slated to open in fall 2013 with about 125 employees, will be in the [Byron G. Rogers](#) federal office building at 1960 Stout St. The office's staff could grow to nearly 600 eventually, economists have said.

Others involved in the patent-office effort say Posthumus worked "tirelessly" to make it happen.

"John dedicated what must have been the better part of his life for a couple of years to make this happen," said attorney [Thomas Franklin](#), a partner in the Denver office of [Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton](#) LLP. "I'm lucky if I get four hours of sleep a night doing my day job, and it's the same for John. He had such devotion for a pro bono effort."

But Posthumus would rather talk about how collaborative and inclusive the process was, giving credit to Franklin, attorney [Michael Drapkin](#) of [Holland & Hart LLP](#), state and city government officials, Colorado's congressional delegation and economic-development officials.

He also thanked his family and his firm for their support during the long, time-intensive campaign to land the office.

"A coalition of folks worked on our submission to the USPTO," Posthumus said. "A critical component of our case was an economic study done by the Leeds School of Business [at the [University of Colorado Boulder](#)] and [Rich Wobbekind](#). They did a phenomenal job bringing it together in a short amount of time over the holidays."

The process to land the office started just after the Democratic National Convention came to Denver in 2008. So it was a big setback when the first regional patent office was awarded to Detroit in late 2010, he said.

"When we lost out to Detroit, we were kind of at a loss as to what we'd do next," Posthumus said.

They regrouped and went back to Washington, D.C., to get Colorado's legislators on board with the effort.

"We had a critical meeting with Sen. [Michael Bennet](#)'s office in February 2011," he said. "We decided to introduce an amendment to the America Invents Act [AIA] that would require three or more satellite patent offices by 2014."

Drapkin recalls a meeting with U.S. Rep. [Ed Perlmutter](#), D-Colo., in a copy room.

"John, Tom Franklin and I, and Rep. Perlmutter were all crammed in there," Drapkin said. "No one else could have fit in the room. And we pitched him the patent office story."

Bennet and U.S. Sen. [Mark Udall](#), D-Colo., ultimately sponsored the amendment, which was added to the AIA that President Barack Obama signed into law in September 2011.

Franklin said the process taught him that democracy really does work.

“Three guys that knew nothing about politics were able to meet with the executive branch and meet with senators and representatives to convince them of a vision,” Franklin said. “Through the dogged pursuit of that vision — explaining it in one way to Democrats and in a different way to Republicans — we were able to sell a vision that became a bill ... a bill on Capitol Hill.”

And no one was more dogged in the pursuit of the Denver patent office than Posthumus, Drapkin said.

“There were times it didn’t look like things were going to go our way,” he said. “John never gave up. He just willed it to happen.

“John really had a vision, and in his mind, this was going to happen.”

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