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## Leader of patent-office push says Denver's win will spur tech, jobs

**BY MARK HARDEN,**  
NEW MEDIA EDITOR

The Denver attorney who was a key leader in the effort to win a satellite patent office for Denver says it will pay major economic dividends “for basically zero taxpayer money.”

“And that’s an amazing thing,” John Posthumus said, chuckling.

Posthumus, an intellectual property specialist and shareholder at Sheridan Ross PC, said Sunday’s news that Denver is one of three cities picked for a regional U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) center was “very gratifying” given the long hours he and others put into the effort.

“It’s absolutely wonderful for Colorado that this will be coming to our community,” Posthumus said in an interview. “It will impact us on a whole host of levels.”

U.S. Sen. Michael Bennet, who sponsored a key piece of legislation that paved the way for a Denver patent office, said Sunday that “the work ... was a truly collaborative effort that included bipartisan support in government, the business community, academia and from local leaders across the state. In particular, patent attorney John Posthumus has worked tirelessly for years as one of the leaders to make this a reality.”

Posthumus, for his part, said the legislation sponsored by Bennet and Sen. Mark Udall that called on the USPTO to create three or more regional satellite patent offices across the country in the next few years was a “game changing moment.”

That measure came after Detroit was picked for the first satellite patent office outside the Washington, D.C., area, which Posthumus said was a discouraging development. “We were very close to getting the first one and we lost out,” he said. “At that point it was very uncertain what would happen.”

But the push for Denver didn’t slow down.

Posthumus was part of the team -- along with Thomas Franklin of Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton LLP in Denver and Monisha Merchant, Bennet’s senior adviser for business affairs -- that presented a report (download here) to government officials in January making the case for the selection of Denver for the patent office.

He and other officials estimate a \$439 million economic impact on Colorado in the first five years a patent office is open -- and with little or no taxpayer money, since operations are funded by patent fees.

In addition to Bennet and Udall, Posthumus credits a range of Colorado leaders, “from Mayor [Michael] Hancock to Gov.



Kathleen Lavine | Business Journal

**John Posthumus, Sheridan Ross PC attorney and shareholder and a leader of Denver’s campaign for a satellite patent office, in a December 2011 photo.**

[John] Hickenlooper to Tom Clark [of the Metro Denver Economic Development Corp.] ... and many others.”

“This was a completely bipartisan effort. Everyone recognizes the value of this,” he added.

Posthumus said he believes that Denver’s relatively low costs for commercial real estate leases and other expenses were a key reason the city got picked, along with Denver International Airport and the city’s expanding rail transit network.

Also, he said, the city has going for it a pool of highly educated technical and scientific workers and a high quality of life -- both pluses for Denver “in terms of retention and recruitment. ... I think [patent office] officials got the sense they could successfully recruit and retain quality examiners and engineers and the other people they need here.”

One area where Denver was “a little challenged” against other cities, Posthumus said, was in the number of local companies filing patent applications and the number of patents filed. But he said having a patent office here will likely spur patents locally, as well as investment and the relocation of tech companies here.

“It’s going to raise the sophistication in how Colorado companies use the patent office. And patents are very important in bringing in capital and investment,” he said.