

Hispanic legal group opens Denver conference with focus on patent law

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Patents and intellectual property law will be a focus this week as 2,000 attendees arrive in Denver for the Hispanic National Bar Association convention.

"It's tremendous for the city," said conference co-chairwoman Cristal Torres DeHerrera. "It's been 20 years since the HNBA was last in Denver."

The convention takes on a special significance because Denver was chosen last year as the site of a new U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

The Hispanic attorneys' group in March announced a partnership with Microsoft to increase the number of Latino lawyers specializing in U.S. intellectual property law.

Microsoft pledged \$200,000 to fund a program that will place Latino law students in a patent-law immersion program.

A recent survey by the American Intellectual Property Law Association found that in law firms with more than 100 attorneys, only 2 percent of intellectual-property lawyers are Latino.

At this week's convention, several continuing legal-education seminars will address intellectual property issues including one panel with attorneys from Microsoft and General Electric, and another that explores IP implications in corporate use of social media.

On Friday evening, the HNBA's Intellectual Property Law Section hosts a "speed networking" career fair.

Other sessions will address a range of legal topics.

"When you think of the issues facing Hispanics, they're really the issues facing all Americans, like immigration law and education," DeHerrera said. "Everybody is trying to figure out how to make public education work better."

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