

## In The News

# Munsch Hardt names new head of Austin law office; eyes major growth

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Munsch Hardt Kopf & Harr PC has appointed David Mattka to lead the law firm's Austin office into a new growth phase.

Mattka succeeds M'Lou Patton Bell, who will remain with the firm to concentrate on her real estate practice.

The Dallas-based commercial law firm is eyeing major growth in the Austin market in 2015 after having seen significant growth in its Houston office last year, said CEO Phil Appenzeller, Jr.

"Our plan targets transactional, corporate and real estate [practice] growth. We already have a strong litigation team in Austin," Appenzeller said.

During 2014, the firm focused its attention on its fast-growing Houston office, which doubled in size from 11 to 23 attorneys and moved into an expanded office space.

Appenzeller said the Austin office, which has 12 attorneys and seven other staff members, should see growth in the range of 50 percent this year.

Munsch Hardt is moving into the newly constructed Colorado Tower downtown at 303 Colorado St. late this summer. The firm's additional square footage and uniquely designed communal layout will encourage collaboration among the office and offer space for new hires.

Munsch has leased 14,768 square feet with an option to take the rest of the 26th floor. Floorplates, on average, run about 24,500 square feet. The architect for the tenant improvements is Marc Bove of The Bommarito Group. Munsch is scheduled to occupy its new space on Aug. 1. Patton Bell spoke to ABJ last year about the reasons for the move.

Appenzeller said the firm is still bullish on the Texas economy and noted that if oil prices continue to fall it could actually boost the firm's "controversy" side of the business if more litigation and bankruptcies occur.

Mattka's appointment was effective Jan. 1. He joined the firm 28 years ago and has served in a number of leadership roles, including business litigation section head in Austin and member of the management committee.

"Austin is rich with commercial activity in the construction, real estate, technology and manufacturing sectors right now, and we look forward to helping these thriving businesses," Mattka said in a statement. Greg Barr is the managing editor of Austin Business Journal, responsible for day-to-day digital and print coverage.

By: Greg Barr