



Honigman digs new downtown Kzoo location

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KALAMAZOO —If three Ls of real estate are location, location, location, Kalamazoo must be a good place for intellectual property law.

For legal firm Honigman, Miller, Schwartz and Cohn, a move into new digs downtown places it at the center of the life sciences in Kalamazoo, but within easy reach of its clients around the country and the globe. The Michigan-based firm entered the Kalamazoo market with temporary offices on West Michigan Avenue a year ago, but quickly outgrew its offices there. The move into the Columbia Plaza gives the firm a permanent foothold in the life sciences, intellectual property and community banking industries in the Kalamazoo region, while maintaining a global reach, CEO David Foltyn told *MiBiz*.

"To go from a temporary location to where we are now, this has been a great journey," Foltyn said. "At its core, it is a simple business — it is about people and relationships. When we came to Kalamazoo, we made it a point to hire the best people. This is a testament to that."

Honigman's office on 350 East Michigan Ave. houses 11 attorneys, seven professional and nine administrative staff members all in 10,000 square feet of office space. The firm views Kalamazoo as a significant hub for its intellectual property attorneys, with several life sciences firms housed in the same building, but within reach of the 80 percent of its business that lies outside of the state.

Phillip D. Torrence, Honigman's Kalamazoo office managing partner and chair of the firm's Community Banking Practice Group, expects the firm will soon be exercising its option to lease additional space on the fourth floor in order to house additional attorneys. Since opening its Kalamazoo office in October 2008 with seven attorneys, five professional staff members and two administrative staff members, it has expanded by more than 90 percent. The firm recently announced the addition of a new attorney, David J. Johnson in the Intellectual Property Practice Group of its Corporate and Securities Department in Kalamazoo.

Johnson comes to Honigman from Dorsey & Whitney in Minneapolis.

Now in its 60th year, Honigman is a Michigan-based business law firm with an international practice. Headquartered in Detroit, with offices in Lansing, Oakland County, Ann Arbor and Kalamazoo, the firm's attorneys practice in more than 40 different areas of concentration. The firm's leadership views its Michigan roots as key to its identity as a fully integrated firm with 230 attorneys on staff. Torrence said the decision to remain in Michigan was as much a fiscal decision as any, due to lease rates that are half that on the coasts. He said he and other partners rack up

frequent flyer miles quickly as they travel to meet with clients around the country.

"The silver lining in Michigan's tough economy is that our overhead costs remain low," Torrence said. "We have had an amazing first year. We have established a niche in the life sciences, intellectual property and community banking markets."

The Columbia Plaza building is owned by Columbia 12 LLC and is home to a number of the region's leading life science and medical device companies, including the Apjohn Group LLC, which is one of its major tenants. Originally the Columbia Hotel, built in the late 1890s, the building had been expanded several times. In 1985, the hotel underwent three years of renovations before it re-opened as an office building in 1988.

"We are delighted to welcome Honigman to Columbia Plaza," said Mac Waldorf, Managing Partner of Columbia 12. "There is tremendous synergy between Honigman and our current tenant base, and we look forward to developing a great working relationship with the firm and to being a part of its future growth. A firm such as Honigman represents a commitment to the region, and the next generation of businesses in Kalamazoo."

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