

Albany Law Firm Poised to Enter Buffalo

The Buffalo legal community is about to get a little more crowded.

Albany-based Tully Rinckey PLLC plans to open an office in downtown Buffalo in January.

The firm currently employs 40 attorneys in offices in Albany, Syracuse, Arlington, Va., and Washington, D.C..

Founding Partner Mathew Tully said his firm had been researching locations since opening in Virginia 18 months ago and Buffalo has long been on its radar.

“We spent about 18 month researching the various Upstate locations, and we thought Syracuse would be the best location for managerial purposes and we opened that office in July,” he said.

Tully said the immediate growth in Syracuse, coupled with the growth in the firm’s other offices, led to the decision to move up plans to open in Buffalo from April 2013, to the first of the year.

Tully said the Buffalo office will break the mold his firm has followed in terms of selecting an office space.

“Traditionally, we avoid downtown areas, but in Buffalo, we are changing up our business model and moving downtown.”

Tully said he is still a few weeks out from signing a lease, but he said the decision to open in the city was driven, in part, by the firm’s desire to build an immigration practice in Buffalo.

“We wanted to be close to the immigration courts and the county courts and this location allows us to do that,” he said.

Tully said he hopes to have three to five attorneys on staff when the office opens on Jan. 1, and he took what he called a “shock and awe” approach to headhunting prospective attorneys for its Buffalo office, mailing out 5,469 letters to practicing attorneys in the region, soliciting lawyers to join his firm.

“That’s how we did it in Albany and Syracuse and because it’s a unique approach in this business, we have seen success,” he said. “The letter generates talk in the legal community and a great deal of buzz, which helps with our recruiting.”

Tully said a lot of attorneys tend to be conservative, and leery of jumping ship, so while they may not come calling when the letter arrives, he has seen lawyers take a wait-and-see approach, then seek a position with the firm as much as a year later.

“We are planning to be at 15 attorneys in the Buffalo office at the three-year mark,” he said. “So this is long-range marketing as well.”

In addition to immigration, Tully said the firm will focus its Buffalo office on family and matrimonial law, criminal defense/DWI, bankruptcy and estate planning.

While acknowledging that Western New York is perceived by many as a tough market to do business in, Tully said his research shows a region poised for growth and he sees a huge upside to having a presence in the Queen City.

“Immigration is a national law practice, so we see our immigration attorneys in Buffalo supporting our attorneys in our other offices,” he said. He sees that as being just one element that will ensure the growth and success of an office in Buffalo.

“We are pretty comfortable with our business model and infrastructure,” he said, “and we expect to meet our numbers in terms of growth.”