

Sheppard Mullin Set to Expand, Announces Second San Diego Location

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Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton LLP, the 11th largest law firm in California, announced today that it is expanding and will open a **new office in the Del Mar Heights area of North San Diego County**. This office **will be Sheppard Mullin's fifth office statewide** and its second in the San Diego area. The firm will also maintain its downtown San Diego office. The firm anticipates opening its doors in North County in late July or early August 2001.

The Del Mar Heights office, located adjacent to Del Mar Heights Road at 12544 High Bluff Drive in San Diego, is designed to serve the needs of the area's thriving technology, biomedical, broad-band communications, wireless telecommunication and e-commerce businesses, which have earned the area the moniker of "Silicon by the Sea." Sheppard Mullin's attorneys already assist many new economy companies in North County with formation, venture capital, labor and benefits, securities, intellectual property and real estate issues. The 14,000 square foot office will be staffed with attorneys who are at the forefront in the practice areas of intellectual property, corporate law, labor, real estate and litigation.

Richard Brunette, Chair of Sheppard Mullin's Executive Committee, explained the firm's reasoning for expansion into North County: "The vast majority of the business growth in San Diego is occurring in North San Diego County. We want to be responsive to our clients' needs and be an integral part of the growth of the North County business community."

"We are not looking merely for the company that will have the next IPO, but also to maintain our tradition of providing solutions to a broad range of our clients' business needs," noted **Dick Kintz**, a senior partner in the firm's Corporate and Securities Group in the San Diego office, and Co-Chair of the firm's Corporate and Securities Group. "The firm intends to continue to represent a balanced group of traditional companies, as well as the high tech companies. Consistent with this philosophy, the partners who will initially be resident in the Del Mar Heights office will be from our corporate, real estate, labor, intellectual property and litigation departments."

Sheppard Mullin has more than 300 attorneys among its four offices in San Diego, Orange County, Los Angeles and San Francisco. It is a full-service firm specializing in corporate and securities, intellectual property, banking and finance, labor and employment, litigation and antitrust, land use and real estate, and tax and estate planning.

"The firm is proud of the broad client mix that we serve and the opening of the Del Mar Heights office is consistent with our philosophy of offering the highest quality legal services in a timely and cost-efficient manner," commented **John Collins**, managing partner of the downtown San Diego office. "The newest Sheppard Mullin location will provide us with additional opportunities to service the needs of the rapidly expanding

marketplace in northern San Diego County."

The first managing partner of the Del Mar Heights office will be Domenic Drago. A Del Mar resident, he is a transactional partner who has been with Sheppard Mullin since 1986. Drago stated, "The Del Mar Heights office will open with approximately 15 attorneys, and we anticipate that number will grow substantially in subsequent months."

The firm opened its downtown San Diego office with seven attorneys on March 3, 1986. The office, located at 501 West Broadway, has grown steadily and currently employs 46 attorneys. A full service law office, Sheppard Mullin's downtown location will continue to service a diverse client base ranging from parties engaged in complex federal litigation to state court actions for breach of contract; from multi-national banks and corporations to local "new economy" businesses; from land use planning for major real estate developers to leasing of downtown office space; from national department store chains to local retailers; and from multi-state construction companies to local contractors. The client list encompasses some of San Diego's oldest established businesses as well as recent arrivals to the region. The firm's work includes full service, hands-on counseling at every stage of the corporate life span.

Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton's San Diego office has been named "**San Diego's Pro Bono Firm of the Year**" by the San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program four times in the last 10 years— most recently in 1999— and received a similar honor from the State Bar in 1991.