

U.S. Commerce Department **Opening Regional Patent Offices (July 2012)**

For the first time in its history, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (“USPTO”) is expanding operations outside Washington D.C., to Dallas, Denver, Detroit, and San Jose. The Detroit office opens July 13, 2012. The other three offices were announced on July 3, 2012. The four new offices will hopefully speed up the patent process. The satellite offices comply with the America Invents Act passed in 2011, which mandated that the USPTO open three satellite offices by September 2014.

The Patent Office believes that the satellite facilities will help the agency reduce backlogs and expedite the approval process. There is currently a backlog of 750,000 patent applications that can take more than three years to review, up from 18 months in 1990.

Patents will still be filed through a database system in Alexandria, where the Patent Office is headquartered, and then divided among the offices for examination. In the future, when a patent application is filed, we may be communicating with Examiners in one or more of these satellite offices.

Patents are a significant factor in private sector job creation. The U.S. Commerce Department issued a recent report finding that intellectual property intensive industries are the source – directly or indirectly – of 40 million jobs, contributing \$5.06 trillion to the U.S. economy in 2010.