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Ryley Carlock takes floor at Wells Fargo Center

BY HEATHER DRAPER

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Phoenix-based law firm Ryley Carlock & Applewhite just put an exclamation point on its commitment to the Denver market.

The firm signed a lease on Nov. 5 for the entire 35th floor — about 26,000 square feet — of the 52-story Wells Fargo Center at 1700 Lincoln St.

The Denver office of Ryley is now on the 18th floor of the 1999 Broadway building. The firm plans to make the move to the “cash register building” sometime in January 2012.

“It’s important for us to be in that particular building,” said Rodolfo (Rudy) Parga Jr., Ryley Carlock managing partner. “It’s an iconic building. When people see pictures of the Denver skyline, it’s right in the middle and people recognize it.”

Ryley wants to expand its footprint in the Rocky Mountain region, so “Denver is an incredibly important part of our overall strategy,” Parga said. “We want Denver to be a full-service firm, similar to our Phoenix office.”

Ryley nearly doubled the number of attorneys in its Denver office in June, when a dozen attorneys from the storied Denver law firm Isaacson Rosenbaum, 10 of them shareholders, joined Ryley. It brought the number of Ryley attorneys in Denver to 26 and the total staff here to 41.

Isaacson shareholders voted to close the firm on June 30, after 50 years in business. Isaacson, which specialized in large construction projects, was hurt by the downturn in the commercial real estate market.

“The addition of the former Isaacson attorneys has gone extremely well and has been a great fit from a business and a cultural perspective,” said Brian Nazarenius, managing shareholder for the Denver office. “That was the springboard for this move [to the Wells Fargo Center]. Everyone enjoys each other, and it’s a great fit.”

Ryley shareholder Matthew Pluss came over from Isaacson and was instrumental in securing the lease for the firm.



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Matt Pluss, attorney at Ryley Carlock & Applewhite, in the firm’s new space on the 35th floor of the Wells Fargo Center at 1700 Lincoln St. in downtown Denver. The Phoenix-based law firm signed a lease Nov. 5 for the entire 35th floor of the 52-story “cash register building.”

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“We wanted to have a space where everyone felt welcome, whether they came from Isaacson or with Ryley,” Pluss said. “And we wanted a space where we had room to grow.”

The space, formerly occupied by Newmont Mining Corp. (NYSE: NEM), will go through a major remodel, including getting rid of cubicles, moving some walls and generally making it “more lawyer friendly,” he said.

The remodel will leave the office with a

more open feel, he said, including more conference or gathering areas and several glass or frosted glass walls.

Parga said the firm is well-positioned to take on a large lease in a high-profile downtown building, despite the economic woes that are hurting some law firms.

“We’ve always run our firm in a very fiscally conservative manner,” he said. “When we approach growth, we’ve always done it in a strategic manner. We’ve never expanded too fast.”

Some of the areas where Ryley sees growth potential for its Denver office are environmental, water resources, litigation and intellectual property practices.

“Our goal in 2012 is to continue the growth and get exceptional, quality people on our team in Denver,” Parga said. “The way we look at growth as a firm — we look at opportunities. If it means bringing one or two individuals over at a time, that’s what we’ll do. Or it could be a practice group or an entire firm.”