

# BOSTON BUSINESS JOURNAL

## Burns & Levinson's pot practice brings firm to Denver

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Burns & Levinson's growing cannabis practice has led it to Denver, where it's brought on a lawyer specializing in marijuana financing and opened its first U.S. office outside of New England.

The firm's newest partner is Katrina Skinner, who was formerly the president and general counsel of Safe Harbor Services, a Denver-based provider of financial services for cannabis businesses.

Burns launched its cannabis practice in 2013, with an initial focus on medicinal marijuana, which at that point was newly legal in Massachusetts. It's since expanded the practice, which now includes more than 20 lawyers, according to the firm's website. Last year, Burns struck a unique partnership with the cannabis-focused law firm Vicente Sederberg LLP, through which the two share clients.

With the Skinner hire, Burns is looking to better assist cannabis businesses with their banking and financing needs, a particularly tricky area of the law given that the drug is still federally prohibited. The firm is already involved in the space: GFA Federal Credit Union, the first institution in Massachusetts to offer banking services to recreational marijuana dispensaries, is a client.

The cannabis group is one of the firm's busiest practices, managing partner David Rosenblatt said. Burns & Levinson has been looking to open an office in Denver for some time because it has so many clients in that industry on the West Coast, he said. In Skinner, the firm has found an attorney whose "expertise with banks, credit unions, merchant processors, and money transmitters will be invaluable to our clients," according to Rosenblatt.



**Katrina Skinner is launching the firm's Denver office**

For now, the new office will serve as a means to service existing clients and add on new ones, Rosenblatt said.

"As our cannabis practice continues to grow, we do foresee adding cannabis talent in that office and possibly other practice areas, but we don't have a specific timetable for that," he said.

In addition to the new Denver outpost and its Boston headquarters, Burns & Levinson has small offices in Providence, London, Andover, Hingham and Wellesley.