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Miami law firm eats up another floor in downtown Houston

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Miami-based law firm **Greenberg Traurig** LLP is expanding its Houston office by building out into a third floor in downtown Houston's Wells Fargo Plaza at 1000 Louisiana St.

The firm currently occupies the 17th and 18th floors of the building, and three years ago negotiated the leasing option to expand into the 19th floor for future expansion. The firm had been subletting the floor up until roughly 18 months ago when it began to remodel the 19th floor in preparation for growth, said [Todd Grube](#), business director at Greenberg Traurig's Houston office.

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Greenberg Traurig ranked 25th on the [Houston Business Journal's 2014 List](#) of the largest Houston-area law firms, reporting a total of 46 Houston lawyers at the time data was collected. The firm has since expanded to house more than 60 lawyers.

"In the past year or so, we've hired 15 new lawyers in Houston, including five shareholders," said [Doug Atnipp](#), co-managing shareholder at Greenberg Traurig's Houston office.

One high-profile get was former Winstead PC partner [Norman Miller](#), who [joined the firm's corporate and securities practice](#) as a shareholder in December.

The firm's two floors were becoming so crowded that it actually hindered recruiting, said Grube. Now, the firm expects to have the renovations done by the end of April, at which point it can embark on recruiting around 20 lawyers to man the new office space.

San Francisco-based architectural firm Gensler has overseen the remodel working with Houston-based O'Donnell Snider Construction.

The cost of the build-out is estimated at \$75 to \$150 per square foot, the bulk of which is covered in the negotiated lease agreement under tenant improvement costs, said Grube. New York-based real estate company Newmark Grubb Knight Frank handled the firm's lease agreement.

The remaining cost covered by the firm goes primarily to furniture and art, the cost of which can range anywhere from \$5,000 to \$15,000 depending on the expense of the decor, said Grube.

In this case Greenberg Traurig is working with Houston-based **Kinzelman Art Consulting** to deck the walls of the new floor, emphasizing local artists wherever possible.

The firm's growth over the past three years has been driven by diversification of its practice areas. Energy is an obvious growth area for the firm, but it's also been beefing up its intellectual property and environmental practices as well, and will continue to ramp up those specialties this year as office space opens up.

Greenberg is the second law firm to recently indicate heady expansion to come. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania-based **Reed Smith LLP** told the Houston Business Journal that [it's planning to more than double its lawyer count](#) over the next five years.

Suzanne Edwards covers money and law for the Houston Business Journal. [Follow her on Twitter for more.](#)