

CENTRAL NEW YORK

# BUSINESS JOURNAL

## Anelli Xavier opens Buffalo office, plans further expansion

BY ERIC REINHARDT

JOURNAL STAFF

SYRACUSE — The Syracuse-based law firm of Anelli Xavier has opened a new office in Buffalo, adding to its existing upstate offices in Syracuse, Rochester, and Albany.

The firm, which focuses solely on defending clients accused of driving while intoxicated (DWI), has handled cases throughout New York, says Tom Anelli, managing attorney at Anelli Xavier.

Anelli spoke to the Business Journal News Network on Aug. 14. The Anelli Xavier firm is headquartered at 269 W. Jefferson St. in Syracuse.

The Buffalo office opened in July, says Anelli. The firm also has plans for additional offices in other areas of New York state.

"In 2015, we hope to open in the Hudson Valley ... probably an office in White Plains ... and then, also hopefully in 2015, we hope to open in Long Island," Anelli says.

The law firm has not yet pursued real estate for an office on Long Island, he adds.

Anelli Xavier has between 25 and 30 total employees, including 15 attorneys. The firm plans to hire at least one attorney before the end of this year.

Lawyers from the firm's Rochester office will handle the cases in Buffalo until it hires new attorneys for the office, says Anelli.

He also notes that any of the firm's lawyers could handle cases in the Buffalo location, or any of the firm's upstate offices.

Anelli Xavier doesn't currently have any support staff in its Buffalo office, so the administrative staff in its Rochester location handles those functions as well, says Brent Xavier, president and partner in the Anelli Xavier law firm.

The firm will add support staff as its market familiarity and case load increase

in Buffalo, he adds.

Xavier spoke to the Business Journal News Network in a separate interview on Aug. 15.

"Essentially, we're a statewide practice," explains Xavier. "As New York attorneys, we're able to handle cases anywhere in the state."

The firm has handled DWI cases in all of New York's 62 counties, including the smaller areas of the upstate region, says Xavier. "They're the markets we also advertise in," he adds.

Xavier credits that business to the firm's Internet-marketing efforts.

"The bigger markets ... where the radio [advertising is] in the mix, we typically have an office presence there as well," he adds.

Xavier declined to disclose any revenue figures for the Anelli Xavier law firm.

### Radio ads

Radio listeners in the Syracuse market hear Anelli's advertisements on various stations. The firm uses similar ads to introduce consumers in new markets to its brand and the DWI defense services it provides.

The advertising campaign generally takes three to four months to "ramp up" consumer awareness of Anelli Xavier in a new market, says Anelli.

"So it doesn't make a lot of sense to build an office out and have somebody sitting there doing nothing while the market becomes accustomed to our ads," he explains.

As the market branding continues, Anelli Xavier will work with a company called HQ and use a "virtual office environment" in a given market until it can secure its own office space, according to Anelli.

HQ is a member of the Luxembourg, Brussels-based Regus Group, which describes itself as the "world's largest provider of outsourced workplaces for

companies of any size."

The law firm pays a monthly fee to use the space until the market "matures," and it then researches possible places for new office space.

As the Anelli Xavier firm seeks an office space, "generally we'll set up near an entertainment district or a spot that we believe will be most convenient" for people who might eventually seek its legal services, says Anelli.



Anelli



Xavier

### The "DWI guy"

In his radio ads, Anelli has branded himself as the "DWI guy," which he says evolved from the way he perceives people talking about business trades.

"Who's your construction guy, who's your siding guy, who's your pool guy," says Anelli, noting the "common speak" he was referencing.

His passion for defending clients accused of driving while intoxicated prompted the pursuit of his own practice to focus on that area of the law.

Prior to launching his own firm in April 2004, Anelli was affiliated with a website called drunkdrivingdefense.com as a representative in New York.

"I was traveling all over New York state handling DWI defense, because it was Internet-based advertising and it covered the entire state," says Anelli.

He eventually became a father and didn't want the constant traveling to keep him from seeing his family, he explains.

After meeting Anelli, Xavier joined the firm as a partner in 2007, figuring he had "something to lend" with his business background.

"I saw what he was doing here. I saw the phone ringing ... and I thought he was on to something. It just developed from there," says Xavier. □

Contact **Reinhardt** at [ereinhardt@cnybj.com](mailto:ereinhardt@cnybj.com)