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## Murphey joins rebranded Odelson firm

Evergreen Park office now represents 50 local government clients

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Odelson & Sterk, one of the region's largest municipal government law firms, added a new partner and rebranded as Odelson, Sterk, Murphey, Frazier & McGrath, Ltd. on March 1.

The firm's new name recognizes managing partner Felicia L. Frazier and senior partners Michael J. McGrath and John B. Murphey. Murphey came from the now-dissolved firm Rosenthal, Murphey, Coblentz & Donahue.

Joining the firm with Murphey is his associate, Amber M. Samuelson. The duo brought over as clients 15 cities, villages and other local government entities.

Combined with Odelson Sterk's 35 longstanding government clients, the merged practice likely has the largest client list of any municipal firm in the state, founding partner Burton S. Odelson said in an early March interview.

The 24-attorney firm will remain at its office at 3318 W. 95th St. in Evergreen Park. Its new website is [osmfm.com](http://osmfm.com).

Murphey said his old firm dissolved after partner Peter M. Rosenthal died 10 years ago and Peter D. Coblentz died in 2018. Former partners

John F. Donahue and Matthew D. Rose opened their own new practice, Donahue & Rose P.C., in Rosemont.

In an interview earlier this month, Murphey said he's known and worked as co-counsel with Odelson and his colleagues for many years and expects the relocation to cut down on his own travel.

"He's got a wonderful team concept at his office, and I'm excited to join that team," he said. "If anything, it will help me provide my service to government clients more efficiently and economically."

The former firm's Loop offices were far from the clients it served, he said.

"We almost always have to go to the clients — the clients never came to us because of the hassle of going downtown," Murphey said. "The logistics of client service was challenging for me with a downtown location."

OSMFM's Evergreen Park office has lower operating costs than a downtown space, which translates to better rates for clients, both Odelson and Murphey said.

"The reality is that for many reasons, public sector lawyers cannot bill at the hefty rates private sector firms do to private sector clients," Murphey said.

"We pride ourselves on lower municipal rates than the downtown firms," Odelson said. "I like to pride



Burton S. Odelson

myself on being a downtown firm in the suburbs."

Odelson said Murphey and Samuelson will help grow certain areas of the firm's litigation and labor portfolio.

"We've always handled that work, but it expands that breadth of our zoning practice, because John is one of the leading zoning lawyers in Illinois," Odelson said.

He also touted Murphey's background representing government clients in federal civil rights lawsuits.

Odelson, who started his practice 47 years ago, maintains a large electoral law caseload, representing candidates and incumbents in their legal efforts to get or stay on a ballot — or working to remove or prevent opponents from appearing on the same ballot. He also works with county clerks who administer elections.

"I would dare say we've handled more election cases than any law firm in Illinois," he said.



John B. Murphey

And the electoral law work is an effective way to meet and earn business from local officials, Odelson said.

Among the communities his firm represents: Aurora, Bolingbrook, Calumet City, Calumet Park, Chicago Ridge, Country Club Hills, Darien, Dolton, Lemont, Northlake, North Riverside, Olympia Fields and Robbins. Odelson also listed fire protection districts, south-suburban school districts and township governments.

"I've always billed ourselves as a one-stop shop," Odelson said. "We do their labor work, we do their litigation, we do their zoning, we do their everyday municipal work."

And in the private sector, the firm represents developers and businesses like Hartz Construction and Aetna Development Corp.

"John's firm and my firm have gone way back," Odelson said. "It's a great opportunity with both of us."