



Russell J. Austin at Deer Creek Hills preserve

Murphy Austin Adams Schoenfeld LLP



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Murphy Austin Adams Schoenfeld LLP is a 26-attorney Sacramento law firm representing businesses and business owners, public agencies and nonprofit organizations in a wide variety of transactions and dispute resolution matters. The firm's practice teams focus on business and commercial real estate, health care, construction litigation, labor and employment law, tax and commercial litigation.

Russell J. Austin leads Murphy Austin's Real Estate Law Team and was named *Best Lawyers'* 2010 Sacramento Real Estate Lawyer of the Year.

Q. How does your law firm distinguish itself in the Sacramento region?

A. It's really the people who distinguish one law firm from another. Every partner at Murphy Austin brings years of focused expertise, and we are supported by an outstanding team of associate attorneys, paralegals and legal support staff. Thus, we provide highest-quality counsel at very reasonable rates to our clients, who include California hospital networks, university medical systems, national bottling corporations and major area commercial developers, business owners and employers.

Q. What are the challenges for today's businesses in real estate law? Any hot-button issues?

A. The commercial financing crisis continues to present a critical challenge for Sacramento developers. As commercial loans come due and new financing dwindles, we have seen a marked increase in "work outs" and other restructurings. As budgets tighten, community and nonprofit organizations become vulnerable. I've been privileged to provide pro bono representation to organizations, including the Crocker Art Museum Foundation, The California Museum for History, Women and the Arts, B Street Theatre and Make-A-Wish Foundation of Northern California.

Q. What advice would you give a business seeking to hire a real estate law firm?

A. Before engaging any law firm, businesses should ensure attorneys in the practice have the requisite expertise and a strong reputation for professional excellence and integrity. It is also important to have confidence in the firm's abilities and to be certain the firm is the right fit to meet the project goals. Our success is built on developing long-term relationships with clients and becoming an integral part of our clients' problem-solving and decision-making process.

Q. Your real estate practice includes land conservation work. What important project has Murphy Austin achieved as a legacy for the region?

A. We support the efforts of the Sacramento Valley Conservancy, a nonprofit land trust with a mission to preserve the region's open spaces and natural landscapes. For the past eight years, I have served on the SVC Board and have served as president and chair of the Board's Land Acquisition Committee. With projects like the Deer Creek Hills preserve, SVC has begun to realize its vision of open space and working ranches in the east county, which will eventually result in an open space corridor connecting Deer Creek Hills to the American River Parkway.

Q. What benefits of your Sacramento Metro Chamber membership are useful in growing your business or serving the community?

A. I cannot say enough about the positive impact that the chamber has had on our community. Through Cap-to-Cap and the State Legislative Summit, the chamber gives the Sacramento business community an effective voice in policy decisions at the local, state and federal levels.

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