

UPANDCOMING LAWYERS

Michael Koutnik

Fox, O'Neill and Shannon

al and operational filings and documents, making regulatory filings, and negotiating a complex lease for the new entity.

He also recently represented a Wisconsin agricultural company in a sale of more than 8,500 acres of farmland, valued at more than \$45 million.

"Just the thought of the overwhelming and complex nature of this transaction would have made many younger (and some older) attorneys blanch," Slomowitz said.

Koutnik said a transaction that size came with both the usual issues and some unexpected surprises.

"Anytime you deal with that size of a transaction with land, there are going to be various things that come up," he said. This includes easements or an error in a property's legal description.

But, then there was an issue where one parcel was never initially registered with the state. When the federal government grants parcels, Koutnik explained, they do so with a land patent. That patent didn't exist with this particular parcel, an error made a long, long time ago.

Koutnik said he was told he'd likely never see that issue again in his career.

But in handling these issues overall, said Koutnik, organization is key. He started by getting plat maps for all the parcels to look for issues.

"Once I got my arms around the issues, then I got them taken care of," he said.

One thing Koutnik said he likes about working at Fox, O'Neill and Shannon is that, unlike some larger firms, he is getting to make a big impact right away.

"It's meaningful work," he said. "That's kind of the big part of it. I feel like you're actually contributing to the final product."

-- Alex Zank



Koutnik making big, immediate impact

Michael Koutnik has family to thank for turning him onto a career as a lawyer.

When asked what helped him make the plunge to attend law school and pursue a career in the field, Koutnik, an associate at Fox, O'Neill and Shannon, immediately gave credit to his grandfather, who served as a district attorney in Manitowoc County, and his brother, who like him, attended Marquette University Law School.

During his nearly four years with Fox, O'Neill and Shannon, Koutnik has developed a corporate practice focusing on commercial and real-estate transactions. And even in that

short time, he's already made a name for himself.

"His legal determination and professional development rival attorneys who have practiced far longer than Mike," Diane Slomowitz, a shareholder of Fox, O'Neill and Shannon, said in nominating Koutnik.

For instance, Koutnik represented an international business establishing its U.S. headquarters in the Milwaukee area, Slomowitz pointed out. The services he provided that client included structuring the newly created entity to fit within the parent company's corporate organization, completing the entity's organization-