

# New Orleans CITY BUSINESS

## Daily Update

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## Houston-based accounting firm MFR to open N.O. office

by Ben Myers Staff Writer

**UP** to the **MINUTE**  
**NEWS**

Houston-based MFR, which bills itself as the largest Hispanic-owned accounting firm in the country, plans to open a permanent office in downtown New Orleans at 1010 Commons.

The certified public accounting firm is currently managing programs for the Housing Authority of New Orleans and consulting with the Louisiana Recovery Authority. Its West Bank office is staffed with about 70 full-time employees. Roland Rodriguez, MFR co-founder and managing principal, said he hopes to add an additional 30 to 40 employees by the spring of 2011.

The expansion would make MFR among the largest CPA firms in the New Orleans area. Based on New Orleans CityBusiness surveys, only six metropolitan area companies have more than 70 professionals on staff, with Ernst & Young topping the list with 124.

New Orleans will become MFR's fourth permanent office in the United States and the firm's second-largest.

Rodriguez declined to elaborate on the specifics of the firm's work with HANO and the LRA but said MFR will continue working with government while expanding its relationships with private enterprises.

"Public agencies are a large target," Rodriguez said. "At the same time, we work with large multinational energy companies."

Additionally, Rodriguez said, the firm is attracted to New Orleans by a new wellspring of small Hispanic-owned businesses that are working on the city's reconstruction.

"You have changing demographics taking place related to the construction industry," Rodriguez said. "Those individuals are entrepreneurs who are looking to grow their businesses."

The firm will also explore relationships with health care organizations, both for-profit and nonprofit, and MFR will look for new employees with a background in that field. Beyond health care experience, MFR is recruiting professional accountants, internal auditors and general consultants with project management experience.

Darlene Kattan, director of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Louisiana, said the city's business community has been slow to recognize the need for Hispanic-owned firms.

"A new business is a new business, but given the demographics no one was especially considering the attraction to Hispanic businesses," Kattan said. "They want to come here. They want to spend money here."

Kattan said she will introduce MFR at the chamber's quarterly luncheon Friday. Reservation information can be found at [www.hccl.biz](http://www.hccl.biz).