

Jackson Lewis Joins Forces With Nebraska Labor Boutique

Law 360, New York (March 30, 2009) — Labor and employment firm Jackson Lewis LLP has grabbed a foothold in the Midwest by merging with Omaha, Nebraska-based employment boutique Berens & Tate PC, adding five partners and four associates to Jackson Lewis' roster, the firms announced Monday.

The move makes Jackson Lewis the first national employment firm to open an office in Nebraska, the firm said.

Berens & Tate felt like a natural addition, Jackson Lewis managing partner Patrick L. Vaccaro said, because, like Jackson Lewis, Berens & Tate is a very "hands-on" labor and employment firm and many of the firms' practice areas overlap.

The merger will give Jackson Lewis an expanded client base in the Midwest, as well as a home base in a region where the firm already has some major clients, Vaccaro said.

"This is a part of the country where we have no competition," he said. "We have clients in [the Midwest] and I think that our clients will be better served."

Through the move, Jackson Lewis will also pick up nationally known labor and employment lawyer Kelly Berens, who will serve as managing partner for the Omaha office, and partners Joe Dreesen, Chris Hoyme, Tim Loudon and Chad Richter.

For the Berens & Tate attorneys, the merger means the chance to practice at an expanded national level, as well as access to the resources of a nationwide law firm.

"They do the full gamut of labor and employment — training, counseling, litigation," Vaccaro said. "What we will be able to do is provide bench strength, backup, and expertise in certain areas, and we will give them the opportunity to compete for bigger and better work and RFPs."

"My partners, associates and I are very excited about this incredible opportunity to join what we consider to be the premier workplace law boutique in our region and the nation," Berens said in a statement.



“The merger with Jackson Lewis allows us to expand our practice geographically; gives us the capability to offer services in the areas of employee benefits/ERISA and affirmative action; and increases our ability to serve the immigration, training and other workplace law needs of our clients,” he said.

“We have no doubt the synergy from our new firm will create opportunities to expand our client base and enhance the level of legal services our existing clients and friends have come to expect,” Berens said.

“It’s good for them and it’s good for us,” Vaccaro added. “We are very comfortable with the people that are coming over, and Kelly is a very significant player who has a big reputation. It was a very nice fit.”

With the addition of the nine lawyers from Berens & Tate, Jackson Lewis will have 565 attorneys practicing in 41 offices across the U.S. The Omaha office is expected to serve clients in Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, North Dakota and South Dakota.

— *By Julie Zeveloff*