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Bolstering defense: HeplerBroom grows by adding attorney teams

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It's been a busy year for the Edwardsville-based litigation firm HeplerBroom LLC, which has added 16 new attorneys to its Chicago area offices this year by combining with smaller firms and practice groups.

The recent increase in attorney numbers comes on the heels of long-term growth at the firm, which has expanded from 80 attorneys in 2007 to 136 across its six offices today, located in St. Louis, Chicago, Crystal Lake, Edwardsville and two locations in Springfield.

In January, HeplerBroom merged with Crystal Lake-based construction law group Aleen R. Tiffany P.C., which brought three new attorneys to the firm. Later that month, a six-person first-party insurance litigation group of former Johnson & Bell Ltd. attorneys joined HeplerBroom. On Oct. 1, the firm's professional-liability practice expanded with seven additional attorneys when firm Hay & Oldenburg LLC came on board.

The growth in the firm's Chicago area offices comes shortly after it expanded its Springfield presence at the beginning of the year by merging with existing Springfield-based environmental firm Hodge Dwyer & Driver.

A driving reason behind the growth has been meeting client demands, according to Troy A. Bozarth, a HeplerBroom partner and the immediate past president of the Illinois Association of Defense Trial Counsel.

Including the newest additions, there are now six former IDC presidents working at the firm.

"We are not a firm that targets

a certain number or a certain particular type of practice and puts that above all else. We're really looking for great people and great lawyers to be partners with," Bozarth said. "These particular practice areas we certainly have had some experience with, but what they've done is they've really supplemented and added to what we already had, and it provides more services that we can provide to our clients across the whole geographic footprint."

Bozarth said the firm's expansion isn't tied to hitting any certain number of attorneys or enhancing any particular practice areas. Rather, he said, the firm has strategically grown in ways that best fit what HeplerBroom's clients say they need, whether that be in a certain city or practice area.

"A lot of our expansion and growth has been client-service driven, trying to make sure we're giving our clients the biggest platform, and a platform they're looking for," he said. "We aren't out looking to grow just to grow."

One of HeplerBroom's new partners through one of its mergers this year is Aleen R. Tiffany — the IDC president in 2013-14 — who founded her own firm in Crystal Lake in 2005. Tiffany and two of her associates joined HeplerBroom, which she said was inspired in part by understanding the firm's values through friendships she's had with HeplerBroom attorneys. Another driving factor was the ability to give her own clients more service by joining the larger firm, Tiffany said.

"Joining HeplerBroom, from my perspective, gave me what I think is really a rare opportunity in our business to work side by side with real, quality lawyers



Troy A. Bozarth

who have the same values that I have, and at the same time to be able to increase and expand my ability to serve existing clients in all of their areas of need," she said.

HeplerBroom's recent additions of smaller, existing practice groups falls in line with what some legal consultants have reported to be a trend, in which larger law firms are looking to grow by merging with smaller firms as an alternative to making all of its hires individually.

Although HeplerBroom has also grown its numbers by hiring individual attorneys, including several hires this year, Bozarth pointed out that adding the existing practice groups comes with other benefits, including having attorneys who already know how to work together. That can cut down on the time required to transition to the new firm, he said.

"Obviously we think [the added teams] have done a great job, we think that they're great lawyers and they're doing great work, but they're doing it because of the people that they've put in place, how they're



Aleen R. Tiffany

able to manage and evaluate their people and bring in really wonderful lawyers underneath them as well," Bozarth said. "It really only makes sense that you try to keep that as intact as possible and I think, from what we're trying to do, which is take the existing practice group that those three groups have put together, and merge them not only with what we have here at HeplerBroom but with each other as well, we want to get the benefit of all of those working together."

The 16 attorneys who have joined HeplerBroom through the three practice groups are:

- Construction law: Tiffany, Holly C. Whitlock and Jamie M. Rein.
- Professional liability: Linda J. Hay, Anne M. Oldenburg, Patricia M. Noonan, Tammara E. Banasek, Anthony G. Joseph, Susan A. Wagener and Adam D. Shapiro.
- First-party insurance litigation: Rick L. Hammond, Eric W. Moch, Isaac R. Melton, associates James P. DuChateau, Gabriel R. Judd and David M. Albaugh.