

## LAW FIRM MERGERS HOLD STEADY AT PRE-RECESSION PACE

### *14 combinations announced in the 1st quarter*

Newtown Square, PA, April 2, 2012 — There were 14 law firm mergers and acquisitions announced in the United States in the first quarter of 2012, according to *Altman Weil MergerLine*. This continues the rebound of law firm combinations that began in the fall of 2010 and held through all of 2011.

“We’ve averaged about 15 mergers and acquisitions in each of the last six quarters,” said Altman Weil principal Eric Seeger. “The pace of merger activity is holding steady at pre-recession levels.” Typically, there are one or two big law firm mergers announced in the first quarter of the year, as well as a spate of small acquisitions and combinations — and 2012 is no exception. There was one large law firm merger in the quarter, while the balance of reported combinations involved either the acquisition of a firm with 20 or fewer lawyers, or the merger of two small firms.

In January, Atlanta-based McKenna Long & Aldridge announced its intention to merge with California law firm, Luce Forward Hamilton & Scripps. The merger, which was finalized in March, created a new firm of over 550 lawyers.

Five large law firms made geographic moves, expanding their footprints with small, strategic acquisitions. K&L Gates acquired Marini Salsi Picciau in Milan, giving the firm its first Italian office. Littler Mendelson moved into Memphis with the acquisition of labor and employment boutique Kiesewetter Wise Kaplan Prather. Jackson Lewis strengthened its position in Milwaukee by combining with Simandl & Prentice. Baker Donelson made its second acquisition in the hot Houston market, with Drucker Rutledge & Smith. And, Womble Carlyle added an office in the South Carolina capital by acquiring Hall & Bowers in Columbia.

Carroll Burdick & McDonough, a San Francisco-based firm with 72 lawyers, made the only other cross-border deal of the quarter. The firm combined with Schweiger & Partners, a 5-lawyer, intellectual property boutique with offices in Germany and Singapore.

“In this type of combination, the larger firm is able to acquire new client relationships in new markets and the smaller firm is able to execute a transition that works for the partners and their clients,” Seeger explained.

In addition to the 14 new law firm combinations announced between January and March 2012, there were eleven deals announced at the end of last year that were finalized in the first quarter. This is also typical of the annual pattern of merger activity.

There were several noteworthy deals in this category, including; Bryan Cave’s acquisition of Holme Roberts & Owen to create a firm with over 1,000 lawyers; and the merger between Faegre & Benson, a 447-lawyer firm headquartered in Minneapolis, and 323-lawyer Indianapolis firm, Baker & Daniels.

The complete list of law firm mergers and acquisitions announced to date in 2012 as well as an archive from prior years and a five-year trend summary are available online at [www.altmanweil.com/MergerLine](http://www.altmanweil.com/MergerLine).

#### **About Altman Weil MergerLine™**

Altman Weil MergerLine™ logs law firm combinations as they are reported by media outlets and in press releases; links the user to the original news stories; and, compiles key statistics on each deal. The online service also includes an archive of past mergers and a section of commentary and analysis. Learn more at [www.altmanweil.com/MergerLine](http://www.altmanweil.com/MergerLine).

#### **About Altman Weil**

Founded in 1970, Altman Weil, Inc. is dedicated exclusively to the legal profession. It provides management consulting services to law firms, law departments and legal vendors worldwide. The firm is independently owned by its professional consultants, who have backgrounds in law, industry, finance, marketing, administration and government. More information on Altman Weil can be found at [www.altmanweil.com](http://www.altmanweil.com).

###