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Meckler firm adds San Francisco office; 11 lawyers will man location

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A Chicago-based law firm opened a new outpost today in San Francisco with 11 lawyers who will focus on insurance, labor and employment law.

Meckler, Bulger, Tilson, Marick & Pearson LLP now comprises more than 100 lawyers.

"We already have an extensive practice on the West Coast, both in the insurance and employment law areas," said Joseph E. Tilson, a name partner and co-chairman of the firm along with Bruce R. Meckler. "This just helps us service our clients out there."

The San Francisco office represents the largest move the firm has made since opening in 1994, Tilson said.

Meckler was in San Francisco today for the opening of the new office, which will include seven partners and four associates.

"As we continue to experience growth in all of our practice areas, San Francisco offers us the opportunity to further expand into a vibrant legal market — with a team of local attorneys who have deep roots in the San Francisco Bay area and whose skills are recognized throughout the nation," Meckler said.

The lawyers joining Meckler, Bulger's San Francisco undertaking include Julia A. Molander from Sedgwick LLP, who will serve as the new office's managing partner.

Molander said she has longtime ties to the Meckler, Bulger firm and has known most of her new fellow partners for a number of years.

"One of the real advantages of opening an office with 11 lawyers is that you have a lot of people on the ground running, meeting clients and billing time even as we speak," Molander said.

The lawyers moved their personal belongings into their new office over the weekend, Molander said.

"We opened up like a flower opens up," Molander said. "It was really spectacular."

Meckler "deserves accolades for having the vision to expand into San Francisco and make it work," Molander said.

Also joining the new office are partners Howard Garfield, Irene Yesowitch, Jason Geller and Karen Uno. Those four left Long & Levit LLP in San Francisco.

Garfield focuses on insurance and employment law, while Yesowitch and Uno concentrate on insurance counseling and litigation.

Geller will lead the Meckler, Bulger firm's labor and law practice group in San Francisco, Tilson said.

Dan Crawford also has joined Meckler, Bulger's San Francisco office as a partner handling insurance and employment litigation. Crawford will continue on as executive vice president and general counsel of Edgewood Partners Insurance Center in San Mateo, Calif.

Another lawyer joining Meckler, Bulger's new San Francisco office as a partner is Fulton Smith III, who left the Barber Law Group in San Francisco. Smith also will concentrate on insurance coverage and litigation.

Associates joining the firm's San Francisco office are Juan C. Araneda, David Borovsky, Teri Mae Rutledge and T.J. Reichert.

The Meckler, Tilson firm opened offices in Dallas and Phoenix during 2007.

"As for future growth, now that we are in San Francisco, we intend to take a hard look at expanding in Los Angeles as well," Meckler said.

"I think the market has changed and for us to be more competitive, we need to be as national-based" as possible, Meckler said.