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Law practice goes global in new network

By Daniel Connolly

Contact

November 22, 2006

An international network is helping the Siskind Susser Bland law firm serve clients around the planet.

Officially announced Tuesday, the organization, known as Visalaw International, has been in place for several months and lets the law firms help each cut red tape around the globe.

It includes one law firm each in Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, Italy, Japan, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States, said Greg Siskind, a partner in the Memphis law firm.

The group plans to add more countries to the organization, which charges a fee for membership.

"I think that as companies are becoming more globalized and they're having to deal with transfers, it seems that every time they have to transfer someone to a new country they go through an exercise of having to identify local counsel," Siskind said. "The immigration firm that they're working with in the U.S. typically doesn't have relationships abroad."

The coalition means that the law firms can work together and that clients receive faster, more efficient service, he said.

Memphis-based Siskind Susser Bland says it is already one of the largest immigration law firms in North America. This summer its predecessor Siskind Susser merged with New York-based Eric Bland Law Firm, known for its clients in the entertainment and fashion industries.

The merged firm has offices in Atlanta, Memphis, Nashville and New York.

The law firm is also well-known for its Web site, visalaw.com, which provides detailed updates and news about immigration law, a complex area that would change rapidly if Congress passes new regulations.

The international coalition is meant to make it easier for the firms to provide a one-stop shop for immigration needs, and it's already working, Siskind said.

He said he frequently calls a Canadian counterpart for help with cases, including musical groups that need permission to go on tour in that country. And he said that on Tuesday he spoke with a German law firm about an American client's issues in moving to there.

The traffic moves the other way, too. A South African law firm recently contacted the Memphis firm about helping an energy company's clients move to Texas, he said. And a Las Vegas gambling industry client that's expanding operations in Asia called on the network's Chinese affiliate to help transfer officers to that region, he said.

"The alliance idea is to make it a lot easier on clients," he said.

-- Daniel Connolly: 529-5296

Siskind Susser Bland P.C.

The Memphis-based law firm has announced that it's cooperating with counterpart firms around the globe

Local office: 1028 Oakhaven Road

Employees: About 50

Other offices: Atlanta, Nashville New York

Web site: visalaw.com

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