

From the Pittsburgh Business Times:

<http://www.bizjournals.com/pittsburgh/print-edition/2012/01/20/large-law-firms-lateral-hires.html>

Large area firms look outside area for experienced lawyers

Premium content from Pittsburgh Business Times by **Patty Tascarella**, Senior Reporter

Date: Friday, January 20, 2012, 6:00am EST

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Most large Pittsburgh law firms added experienced lawyers last year, but for some, the bulk of that activity occurred outside the region.

Several seized the opportunity to start offices in new cities staffed with a few key lateral hires.

That was the approach **Dickie McCamey & Chilcote** took in Raleigh, N.C., Babst Calland used in Charleston, W.Va., **Thorp Reed & Armstrong LLP** utilized in Wilmington, Del., and **K&L Gates** capitalized upon in Sao Paulo, Brazil, and Charleston, S.C.

But these firms — and others — also added to the ranks at already-established offices. Some even hired more outside Pittsburgh than they did on home turf.

[Robert Denney](#), CEO of Wayne-based consultants [Robert Denney Associates Inc.](#), said that speaks to the health of Pittsburgh firms.

“They’re reaching out to build their foothold in more of a regional way,” he said.

Eckert Seamans Cherin & Mellott announced 46 lateral hires last year. Just seven were in Pittsburgh. The additions were in Philadelphia; Boston; White Plains, N.Y.; Wilmington, Del.; and Washington.

"We really have now assembled the practice groups we think will take us through the next decade and we're filling them in," CEO [Timothy Ryan](#) said.

In addition to the new office, Thorp Reed hired six in Philadelphia last year, roughly the same pace it took in Pittsburgh.

"In our mind, it's not related to the economy or legal industry in Pittsburgh — it came down to opportunities," Managing Partner Jeffrey Conn said. "For us, it's a matter of looking where we thought we had the most opportunity for growth, we made a goal to accomplish that and pursued it."

[Lori Carpenter](#), president of **Carpenter Legal Search**, a Downtown recruitment firm that works with law firms and corporate legal departments, believes lateral hiring through multiple offices will be even stronger this year.

"I think we'll see more hiring outside the region in 2012, but I also think we'll see a Pittsburgh-centric focus," she said.

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