

International services group adds to Shook Hardy's scope

BY STEVE VOCKRODT | STAFF WRITER

Shook Hardy & Bacon LLP is taking its far-flung litigation and dispute resolution practices to further reaches of the globe with a new practice group that focuses on coordinating international legal services.

The Kansas City-based law firm long ago opened offices in Geneva and London and handled international litigation for tobacco and pharmaceutical companies, but the formation of a new practice area marks the first time it has coordinated those efforts under one umbrella.

Greg Fowler, a partner based in Shook's Kansas City headquarters, is a co-chair of the new group. He said the 50-plus lawyer group would focus on managing litigation that arises in the United States and spills across foreign borders.

Product liability cases are a bigger problem as European Union laws have become increasingly pro-consumer, he said.

"I kind of like to say that global opportunities bring global risks, so if you're selling your product across borders, then litigation risks will arise wherever your product is sold," Fowler said.

Shook's lawyers also will advise foreign-based clients on the legalities of introducing products into the United States.

The formation of the practice group is in keeping with the growing international scope of the firm's practice. Shook has adopted formal alliances with law firms in Germany, China, Canada and Brazil, and looser affiliation with firms in nearly 70 other countries.

Several other Kansas City-based firms

have international practices to varying extents.

Spencer Fane Britt & Browne LLP doesn't have foreign offices but uses affiliations with international firms to extend its capabilities and to serve as a de facto referral service among the aligned firms.



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said. "That's one of the bright spots of the U.S. economy."

"If you know who you're dealing with ... then that helps you bring value back to your clients we all work with," said Michael Saunders, managing partner of Spencer Fane.

Glenn Hendrix, managing partner of Atlanta-based Arnall Golden Gregory LLP, said the declining value of the U.S. dollar has spurred increased investment in the United States from foreign clients, ratcheting up the need for local legal representation.

"It's partly a function of exchange rates," Hendrix