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Swanson, Martin & Bell expanding with laterals

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With an increasing workload in the Hoosier State, Swanson, Martin & Bell LLP has added a lateral partner and four lateral associates over the past five months.

Three of those lawyers are licensed to practice in both Illinois and Indiana.

"We wanted to make sure we had good depth to help our clients in Indiana," said Timothy G. Nickels, Swanson, Martin & Bell's managing partner.

The Indiana clients include manufacturing and construction companies.

The Chicago-based firm has 120 lawyers working in five offices — four in Illinois and one in St. Louis.

Matthew S. Ver Steeg, who joined the firm as a partner, along with associates Jessica A. Levitt and T. Allon Renfro Jr., are all licensed to practice law in both states.

Ver Steeg joined Swanson, Martin & Bell in July after working for 12 years at Eichorn & Eichorn LLP in Hammond, Ind.

"I applied with them because I knew they had a reputation for

hiring and developing excellent lawyers," Ver Steeg said. "I also knew they had a growing Indiana practice, and that was something I wanted to help them with."

In addition to a general trial practice, Ver Steeg handles product-liability and construction defense matters.

He brought a client, Luke Oil, a fuel distribution company, with him to his new firm.

The fact Ver Steeg lives in the Logan Square neighborhood also was a reason for his move to a Chicago firm. The trip to Indiana could take 60 to 75 minutes each way. His commute downtown is now a half-hour.

As a partner, Ver Steeg can work on cases independently and without guidance from other firm lawyers, Nickels said.

"He can handle a case from start to finish," Nickels said.

Gregory A. Crisman, managing partner of Eichorn & Eichorn, said Ver Steeg "is an excellent attorney, and I wish he was still here."

Chicago-based Swanson, Martin & Bell typically represents defendants in personal-injury matters. Its lawyers also defend product-liability and medical- and legal-malpractice claims. They also handle commercial litigation



Matthew S. Ver Steeg

and defend against toxic-tort litigation, including asbestos-related claims.

Levitt, whose practice involves medical negligence, health-care and product-liability matters, was the most recent lateral addition, joining in early September. She left Johnson & Bell Ltd.

Renfro came to Swanson, Martin & Bell after working as an Indiana deputy attorney general. He has a general trial practice and also handles employment litigation and counseling, along with product-



Timothy G. Nickels

liability matters.

The other lawyers who joined the firm as lateral associates are Kevin M. Ringel and Mallory A. Yontz.

Ringel, who left his job as an associate with a Maryland law firm, concentrates his practice on medical, negligence, health-care and product-liability matters.

Yontz, who handles medical-negligence and health-care cases, left Nora & Tanzillo LLP.

"They vary in years of experience, so they can help us at different levels," Nickels said.