



Abbott Nicholson's Defense & Export Controls Group Featured in Crain's Detroit Business

As the automotive industry continues to contract, manufacturers in Southeast Michigan continue to look for ways to diversify their business. Many are shifting their focus to the burgeoning defense industry that continues to grow in Michigan. Recently, Crain's Detroit Business profiled Abbott Nicholson's Defense & Export Controls, which provides specialized legal services to businesses that supply the defense industry and export goods to foreign nations.

Law firms grow biz helping companies new to defense industry navigate rules

Crain's Detroit Business | July 12, 2009

William Gilbride Jr., COO and managing partner at Abbott Nicholson Quilter Esshaki & Youngblood P.C., and associate Heidi Warren said the firm's budding defense and export controls legal group grew from one client at its inception two years ago to seven today.

Nearly 40 percent of the two attorneys' workload at the Detroit firm involves helping clients comply with the federal International Traffic in Arms Regulation or the related Export Administration Regulations for companies working in defense and related fields, Gilbride said.

"Not everyone who diversifies into defense realizes how important these regulations are. There are restrictions on even sharing information with your own employees who are not U.S. citizens," Gilbride said. "And violations can run over \$1 million apiece, with some possible criminal prosecution."

Federal ITAR and EAR rules govern exporting any defense products, components, engineering and even the sale of "dual use" services and technology that have military applications.

Gilbride said the practice was launched two years ago with Chesterfield Township-based Burtek Inc., maker of vehicles, trailers and mobile antenna systems for the military, and has expanded to several companies. The firm inspects and counsels clients on ITAR and EAR compliance.