

## Mayer Brown Snags Thompson & Knight Partner In Houston

By **Sindhu Sundar**

*Law360, New York (May 01, 2012, 4:57 PM ET)* -- Mayer Brown LLP has snagged a former Thompson & Knight LLP partner as part of its efforts to expand its corporate and securities practice amid a climate of increasing drilling activities in 2012 and ongoing mergers and acquisitions in the oil and gas sector, the firm said Monday.

Kirk Tucker, who joined the firm's Houston office April 25, cited Mayer Brown's focus on expanding its energy practice as among the factors that drew him to the firm, saying he gravitated toward the oil and gas industry over the course of his practice in the corporate and securities area in Houston.

"People are looking for producing property in areas where they're not presently located, like the oil and liquids-rich Bakken Shale," Tucker said Tuesday. "I'm excited to join at this time and am also looking forward to opportunities from the firm's global platform."

Tucker, who earned his law degree from the University of Houston Law Center, practices in a wide range of issues in corporate and securities, the firm said, noting that he focuses on the upstream oil and gas sector, representing clients in matters including mergers and acquisitions, venture capital and financings, public offerings, and compliance with securities and exchange rules.

"Kirk has deep experience and a proven record of success in handling a wide range of corporate and securities matters in the areas of mergers and acquisitions, public and private offerings of equity and debt securities, and corporate governance, particularly in working with domestic and international upstream oil and gas companies," said Neil Wasserstrom, partner-in-charge of Mayer Brown's Houston office. "Kirk's arrival further expands Mayer Brown's corporate and securities offerings within the energy industry, reinforcing the firm's ability to serve client needs in Houston and throughout our global network."

The firm's expansion of its energy practice comes at a time of growth for the overall energy industry, which in 2011 was roughly \$186.5 billion, representing an increase of about one-third over 2010, according to figures from global advisory firm PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP.

The figures indicated also that the average deal size had grown, with so-called megadeals — those over \$1 billion — increasing by 38 percent.

Tucker's appointment comes in the wake of the firm's addition of former Jackson Walker LLP tax attorney Shawn O'Brien to its Houston office.

On April 11, the firm announced that Richard B. Spitzer, formerly of Dewey & LeBoeuf LLP, had joined its New York insurance finance and banking and finance practices, with a particular focus on mergers and acquisitions. The addition of Spitzer followed a week after two other finance and M&A hires — Stephen Rooney and James Woods.

--Additional reporting by Liz Hoffman and Kaitlin Ugolik. Editing by Lindsay Naylor.

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