

Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw

By **Jesse Greenspan**, jesse.greenspan@portfoliomedia.com

Monday, April 16, 2007 --- With about 300 lawyers working on energy matters, Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw LLP has the experience and depth to deal with increasing globalization, the firm said.

“The difference in the depth of our international reach is why I came here,” said Bob Gray, the head of the firm’s energy practice group. He worked at Fulbright & Jaworski LLP for 27 years before joining Mayer Brown in 2005. “It’s not only a larger energy practice, but it’s more integrated globally.”

Gray added that almost all large, general firms, including Mayer Brown, try to have a presence in the major financial centers of the world.

Unlike most other firms, however, Mayer Brown says it is working to place lawyers in the energy centers of the world. Already, it has offices in London, New York, Hong Kong and Houston, and it hopes to expand soon into the Middle East and Russia, according to Gray.

“We’re not going to have anyone in Lagos [Nigeria] because I couldn’t find anyone to go there,” Gray said.

During regular conference calls, which involve up to 100 energy attorneys, Mayer Brown’s lawyers are spread out across numerous time zones. For example, participating in a Feb. 13 conference call were attorneys from the West Coast, where it was 6:30 a.m., London, where it was 2:30 p.m., and Hong Kong, where it was 10:30 p.m.

The energy group also gets together every year at the firm’s annual partners meeting.

“Every single time we have one of these meetings, I learn about what’s going on in the world,” Gray said.

Mayer Brown’s energy attorneys represent clients in the coal, nuclear, natural gas and alternative energy sectors, among others.

One of the firm’s specialty practices is mergers and acquisitions. Last month, it helped Sterling Energy Plc. finalize its \$145 million acquisition of Whittier Energy Corp.

Sterling, an oil and gas exploration company that operates in the Gulf of Mexico and in Africa, doubled its reserves as part of the deal and more than

doubled its entitlement production.

This year Mayer Brown also helped a Japanese energy company with U.S. headquarters in Houston merge with a company in Scotland.

“In our firm, we really work very well with each other,” Gray said. “It sounds corny, and it may sound trite, but we are one firm, and it’s totally without boundaries.”

In its brochure, Mayer Brown said it specializes in energy litigation and arbitration, handling various matters involving pipeline owners, producers, mineral interest owners, lenders, seismic contractors, host governments, oilfield services companies and environmental agencies.

The firm also handles securities, finance, real estate, international trade, tax, intellectual property and environmental matters for energy companies.

“We have vast experience in each of these industries,” Gray said.

Unlike some firms, Mayer Brown has virtually no attorneys who work on energy matters full-time. Instead, its attorneys specialize in different fields and then use their knowledge in the energy sector when needed.

“I have to be a good securities lawyer first, and I have to be a good M&A lawyer first,” said Gray. “And then I take that knowledge to the energy sector and apply it.”

Gray added that he spent 40-50% of his time on energy matters. Some lawyers, like the energy regulatory specialists, spend up to 90% of their time on energy matters, he said, while litigators or IP lawyers, for example, may perform only a small amount of energy work a year.

Gray expected more of his time to be wrapped up representing Chinese companies in the future.

“The Chinese are going into developing countries and basically telling them, ‘We are happy to develop your resources, and, by the way, we’ll be happy to build your schools and roads,’” Gray said.

“When they’re over here, we do work for them over here,” Gray said of his Chinese clients. “When they’re over there, we do work for them over there.

“They like the fact that we have one-stop shopping,” he added.

Overall, Mayer Brown has more than 1,500 lawyers in 14 offices around the world.