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McQuaid firm closes its doors

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The small, San Francisco-based McQuaid Bedford & Van Zandt will be closing its doors on June 15.

And the following day, the majority of the 12-year-old firm's attorneys — 12 of the 18 — will join Bay Area firm Hanson Bridgett.

The Hanson firm announced the hirings Thursday, one week after the decision had been finalized, according to the firm's managing partner.

It all began with a casual conversation about a year ago.

"One of our lawyers who knew one of their lawyers was at a reunion function and they got to talking," said Andrew Giacomini, managing partner of Hanson.

As the conversations became more formal, it became clear to both firms that the move would be beneficial, according to Giacomini and the McQuaid firm's J. Dennis McQuaid. For the currently 135-lawyer Hanson, it was an opportunity to expand its core practices, including its representation of local and regional water agencies. For the McQuaid lawyers, it was about being able to gain the resources of a large firm. The water law practice of name partner Michael Van Zandt was a factor for both.

"He does things in the water area that we don't do, and we do things that he didn't do," Giacomini said.

Van Zandt needed a larger firm too, McQuaid said. "We found ourselves in a position of not being able to allocate even more resources to him and yet he had demands for those resources." The move also will help Lyman Bedford and McQuaid expand their litigation and real estate land use practices, respectively, McQuaid added.

Giacomini said his firm, which has offices in San Francisco, Sacramento and Larkspur, was eager to acquire the smaller firm's Foster City office, which opened in late August 2006.

"We've been looking at moving down south



ONE DOOR CLOSSES, ANOTHER OPENS:

Andrew Giacomini, managing partner of Hanson Bridgett, said the addition of 12 McQuaid Bedford & Van Zandt attorneys will help his firm's practice groups, particularly water law.

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for quite a while and a lot of our clients are there," Giacomini said. "And we've got a lot going on in the high-tech, emerging companies, and sustainability and clean-tech space."

Six McQuaid attorneys will not be joining Hanson because that firm wasn't looking either to acquire new practices or to further add to its existing ones, McQuaid said.

"It was just an inability to make offers to people who would be essentially competing with the folks they already had on board," he said.

A partner in Davis has accepted a position with a Sacramento firm, while an of counsel there will be restarting his solo practice, McQuaid said. "We do not expect any of [the rest] to have a problem finding a home," he said.

McQuaid and Bedford began working together in 1976. Van Zandt joined them in 1991. The three were at the Northern California of-

fice for what was then Chicago-based Keck, Mahin & Cate until, in June 1996, they and six other Keck lawyers spun out to create their new firm.

The firm, which started out with nine lawyers, hit its peak last year with 23, McQuaid said.

The Hanson firm acts as general counsel to the Golden Gate Bridge district, and the firm's clients include the Regents of the University of California, UPS, URS Corp. and Wells Fargo.

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