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Kelley Cawthorne, Ohio Lobbying Firm Merge

The Lansing lobbying firm of Kelley Cawthorne and an Ohio multiclient lobbying firm are merging to provide their clients with services in each other's home states.

Kelley Cawthorne had begun developing a presence in Columbus, Ohio, in recent years. Its merger with the Ohio firm Thomas P. Pappas & Associates will formalize that presence, Kelley Cawthorne leaders said.

At 17 employees, Kelley Cawthorne is the larger of the two firms. Pappas and Associates has four. A joint statement from the two firms announced both would maintain their names in their respective states. Kelley Cawthorne President Melissa McKinley and CEO Rob Elhenicky will continue to lead their firm in Michigan. A statement from the two firms said Mr. Pappas "will continue to lead the Ohio office for years to come under the agreement."

The two firms said the move positions them as the "leading Midwest-based multistate advocacy firm."

Mr. Elhenicky said national trends point to increased partnership and consolidation among lobbying firms to serve clients in multiple capitals.

"Knowing that change is coming, we have taken an innovative step forward by joining forces with Pappas & Associates, creating a new multi-state advocacy team with a footprint stretching from Michigan to Ohio and beyond," he said.

Ms. McKinley said Kelley Cawthorne has previously worked with Pappas & Associates. The two firms complement each other and provide "our clients with new resources across the Midwest."

Mr. Pappas founded his firm in 1995 after working on staff in the Ohio General Assembly and with Columbus law firms.

"We've been successful for nearly 30 years by providing our clients with the resources and reliability that gets results," he said. "By joining forces with Kelley Cawthorne, a firm with decades of advocacy experience in Michigan, we are better positioned to provide our clients the resources a rapidly changing public policy environment requires."

– By Zach Gorchow

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