Chair's Letter from Edwin J. Lukas

Numerous developments over the last 12 months made 2011 an exciting year for business lawyers in Michigan. Legislators enacted the most significant tax overhaul in 17 years by repealing the controversial Michigan Business Tax. Notwithstanding volatility in the equity markets, automotive OEMs experienced greater profitability and improved cash positions on their balance sheets. The Securities and Exchange Commission continued with its unprecedented rulemaking as required by the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act.

The most significant development, however, may be the introduction of programs and legislation in Michigan that will change fundamentally the manner in which businesses resolve disputes with one another. Circuit courts in Macomb County and Kent County recently initiated, as pilot projects, specialized business dockets designed to reduce the time and costs associated with certain business cases while improving the efficiency associated with their administration. At the same time, legislators proposed a bill that would create a statewide business court system on a regional basis and enable counties establishing their own business dockets to "opt out" of the statewide system. The Business Law Section has been actively engaged in these efforts for quite some time. In December 2001, the Section appointed an ad hoc committee to study the benefits and risks associated with such a system. Since that time, representatives of the Section have (among other things) participated meaningfully in the Business Impact Committee of the Judicial Crossroads Task Force convened by the State Bar of Michigan. Through the Section's ad hoc committee, we will continue to analyze the legislation in pursuit of our goal of establishing dispute resolution procedures that are in the best interests of business litigants, our members, and the State of Michigan.

On behalf of the Section's leadership, I'd like to wish each of you a safe and happy holiday season.

Practice Resources

Many of our Section members seek practical and useful information to manage the business side of their practice. State Bar President Julie Fershtman has established an Advisory Committee to the Practice Management Resource Center (PMRC). PMRC is a State Bar tool that helps lawyers, whether newly admitted or in practice for 30 years. PMRC has a depth of resources, including online articles, a lending library, consulting services, and checklists on topics related to the management of the practice of law. If you are unfamiliar with the PMRC, you may find it valuable to visit the PMRC website.

Section Events

- January 11—Debtor/Creditor Rights Committee Meeting (Honigman Miller, Bloomfield Hills)
- January 24—Commercial Litigation Committee Meeting (Brooks Wilkins Sharkey & Turco, Birmingham)
- February 15—Helping Business Clients Succeed in the Changing Economy (Cooley's Grand Rapids Campus)
- March 8—Council Meeting (Butzel Long, Bloomfield Hills)
- May 4-5—24th Annual Business Law Institute (Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, Grand Rapids)

Other Events

- January 23-24—Business Boot Camp II East (Inn at St. John's, Plymouth)
We have many members who have joined the BLS LinkedIn Group, and we are still growing! Your involvement is needed to initiate discussions, reply to inquiries, and share information and opportunities.

If you have not done so already, please consider joining the State Bar of Michigan Business Law Section LinkedIn Group. As a member of the LinkedIn Group, you will be able to start or join in conversations of interest and otherwise participate in the LinkedIn site. There is no cost to join and no obligation to actively participate. However, the more individuals we have active in the Group, the more valuable it will be to each of us. This Group is a closed group limited to Business Law Section members, so it can be a better place to post and share than many other places on the Web.

[Join LinkedIn]—press the "join" button. Your participation will be restricted until you are approved as a Group member. Another method to join is to search for the State Bar of Michigan Business Law Section using the LinkedIn Group search tab.