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Chamberlain, Hrdlicka to Open Philadelphia Office

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Houston's Chamberlain, Hrdlicka, White, Williams & Martin will transform next month from a regionally recognized tax boutique to a national one when three partners and one associate leave the Philadelphia office of Washington, D.C.'s Miller & Chevalier to open a Philadelphia branch of Chamberlain Hrdlicka.

"We have always enjoyed a great reputation as a tax law firm regionally. With these additions, we will now be national," Chamberlain Hrdlicka managing shareholder Wayne Risoli says.

Miller & Chevalier partners Herbert Odell, Philip Karter and Kevin Johnson will start as shareholders in Chamberlain Hrdlicka on Feb. 1. Miller & Chevalier senior associate Jonathan Prokup will join Chamberlain Hrdlicka's Philadelphia office as a senior associate. Odell says he and the three other Miller & Chevalier lawyers joining Chamberlain Hrdlicka "needed a different platform to work from" and Chamberlain Hrdlicka -- having established itself as a leader in the tax field -- provides that platform. Odell began his legal career in the Tax Division of the U.S. Department of Justice where he worked with Chamberlain Hrdlicka founding partner George A. Hrdlicka. The three departing partners joined Miller & Chevalier seven years ago, leaving a firm Odell founded known as Odell & Partners, Risoli says.

"They were really good people and we are sorry to lose them," says Samuel M. Maruca, chairman of Miller & Chevalier's executive committee, about the defections. He says the departing lawyers represent the bulk of the firm's Philadelphia office, which will now operate with two or three lawyers. The Philadelphia branch is Miller & Chevalier's only office outside D.C., he says, adding that the firm will concentrate on building its tax practice in the nation's capital.

Risoli says Chamberlain Hrdlicka -- which started in Houston in 1965 and also has an office in Atlanta -- may open a fourth office by the beginning of the summer in Washington, D.C. He says Chamberlain Hrdlicka is in negotiations with a group of prospective laterals from a Washington tax firm, but he declines to name it. Chamberlain Hrdlicka has 64 lawyers in its Houston headquarters and 31 in Atlanta, in addition to the four in Philadelphia.