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From left to right, Swanson, Martin & Bell LLP associate Kristine Reveille, Exelon Business Services Assistant General Counsel Denise Perry, Swanson, Martin & Bell partner Robert McNamara and Swanson, Martin & Bell associate Anthony Danhelka at the firm's 25th anniversary celebration on Oct. 4 at the Ivy Room courtyard on East Ohio Street. Photo provided by Swanson, Martin & Bell

Firm marks 25 years, opens Indiana office

BY SARAH MANSUR
Law Bulletin staff writer

A Chicago-based law firm has expanded its reach to northwest Indiana.

Brian W. Bell, a founding partner of Swanson, Martin & Bell LLP, said the move to Hammond, Ind., was a natural one.

"We have a long history with Indiana," Bell said.

He and founding partner George F. Fitzpatrick Jr. were born and raised in the Calumet region of Indiana, which encompasses Hammond.

It also helps that he and 10 other lawyers in the firm are dually licensed to practice in Indiana and Illinois, he said.

The new office will be located near the federal courthouse for the Northern District of Indiana.

Timothy G. Nickels, managing partner in Chicago, said the decision to open an office in northwest Indiana was a logical step given the firm's client base there.

Swanson, Martin & Bell launches Calumet satellite to serve major steel client, others

He said they have considered opening an office in that area for some time.

"We have a number of clients who are either headquartered in that area or who have operations in that area and so it made sense for us to have a physical location which would be easily accessible to these clients," Nickels said.

The Hammond office, located at 5930 Hohman Ave., opened for business in August.

One of Swanson, Martin & Bell's major clients in Indiana is Arcelor-Mittal USA, which is the nation's largest steel mill.

Nickels said the office in Indiana is not specializing in one single area of law.

"We are going to focus on representing our clients in all areas of

practice, so that certainly will include product liability, toxic tort defense, environmental litigation and commercial litigation," he said.

Swanson, Martin & Bell, LLP also specializes in class action, premises liability and catastrophic incidents, medical negligence, pharmaceutical malpractice, professional liability and construction litigation trial work.

The firm has more than 130 attorneys working at its offices in Chicago, Lisle, Libertyville, Edwardsville and St. Louis.

This year also marks the firm's 25th anniversary.

"It's very rewarding to start with nine lawyers and after 25 years grow the firm to more than 130 lawyers. And it's almost ironic in the year of our 25th anniversary we're opening an office in Hammond,

Indiana, where I was born and raised," Bell said.

"We are very excited to be in a new market that we've worked in for some time, and we intend on representing our clients both in Lake County [Indiana] and the [Calumet] region and throughout Indiana."

In honor of the 25th anniversary, Nickels said the firm made financial contributions to various charities and local organizations that it has partnered with over the years, including Cristo Rey Jesuit High School on the Lower West Side and Snow City Arts near the University of Illinois at Chicago.

He said the firm also held two events this year to commemorate the 25th anniversary.

"We've tried a variety of ways to celebrate our law firm," Nickels said. "We are very fortunate and all of our lawyers feel fortunate that we've enjoyed good relationships with our clients ... We just feel like we've been very fortunate with our growth and were hoping for another 25."