

## Fennemore Craig Keeps Up Expansion With Ariz. Firm Combo

By **Emma Cueto**

Law360 (May 13, 2025, 4:09 PM EDT) -- Western firm Fennemore Craig PC announced Tuesday that it is set to combine with Phoenix labor and employment boutique BurnsBarton PLC, making it the sixth firm to combine with Fennemore since the start of 2024.

The five attorneys at BurnsBarton, which was founded in 2012 by former Quarles & Brady LLP partners Christine Burns and David T. Barton, will officially join Fennemore on June 2, which will nearly double the number of Phoenix-based attorneys in the Fennemore labor & employment practice. In addition to Burns and Barton, the newcomers are Alison Pulaski Carter, Alexandra Miller and Kate Bartholomy.

Fennemore said the most recent combination is part of its goal to be the preeminent firm in the western United States.

"Each combination is different, and they all bring different things to the table," Fennemore CEO James Goodnow told Law360. "This one is about fortifying our position in the Arizona market and our labor and employment practice."

He added that although the firm has been looking to grow, there is no "magic number" they are aiming for.

"It's about being strong as a firm for our clients and being the dominant player in the western U.S.," Goodnow said.

Burns told Law360 Pulse that over the years BurnsBarton has gotten interest from outside firms, but had never considered the possibility of joining a larger operation until recently. However, the rise of artificial intelligence and consolidation in the Arizona legal market --- driven in part, she said, by new ethics rules allowing nonattorney ownership of law firms in the state --- made the firm decide the time was right

"Fennemore is a firm that's very forward-looking," she said. "It was a very easy fit, knowing the firm's reputation, knowing a lot of their lawyers, and knowing their leadership team is on the cutting edge."

The move will also give BurnsBarton clients access to a regional, full-service platform, she added.

Goodnow said that once the two firms started talking it was clear they were aligned on key factors like client service, the importance of attorney retention, and economic factors such as rates.

The combination is Fennemore's first of 2025, but follows five mergers last year, which **added 80 attorneys and staff** in Denver, added offices in cities like Sacramento and San Diego, and **increased the firm's AI capabilities**.