



**FOR RELEASE: July 22, 2004**

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## **Tom Kramer, Kent Pearson join Bullard Smith Jernstedt Wilson**

### *Kramer heads new employee benefits practice group, expands firm's range of services*

PORTLAND, Ore. – Bullard Smith Jernstedt Wilson is pleased to announce the expansion of its practice which exclusively represents management in labor and employment law matters, to include the highly technical area of employee benefits law. Tom Kramer has joined the firm to head this practice group. Veteran management attorney Kent Pearson also has joined the firm's team of labor and employment law attorneys.

Kramer is one of the few attorneys in Portland and the Northwest who specializes in employee benefits and his addition to Bullard greatly enhances the firm's expansive representation of employers in the labor and employment law arena. He joins Bullard after nine years at Portland law firm Amburgey & Rubin PC. Since 1983, he has represented employers in the areas of qualified and nonqualified retirement plans, health and welfare plans, and funding vehicles for employee benefits plans. Kramer received his law degree from Yale Law School and undergraduate degree from Claremont Men's College (now Claremont McKenna College), and clerked for Judge Otto Skopil on the U.S. Court of Appeals in Portland for two years before entering private practice.

Bullard Smith's expansion comes at a time when the firm is finding that employee benefits are a growing issue in labor negotiations. Bullard President Ken Jernstedt said, "Employers are eager for guidance through the current health insurance crisis and are looking for cost-efficient ways to maintain health care for their employees. In light of this trend in management and labor relations, there actually are very few employee benefits specialists in Portland." Jernstedt added, "With new developments in the law and a growing number of vehicles with which to take advantage of these developments, Tom can provide employers with a conscientious, thoughtful analysis of these growing options and assist with developing a strategy that will help employers achieve their goals. He brings to our firm a rare combination of technical competence, client communication skills, and knowledge of employment issues as they relate to labor law, giving the Bullard firm a depth and breadth of resources that is unmatched in the area."

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Kent Pearson's extensive knowledge of wage and hour law is complemented by his broad-based experience with traditional labor issues, employment agreements, plant closings, employer policies, administrative hearings, and day-to-day management consultation. Pearson began his career with Portland's former Spears Lubersky firm (now Lane Powell Spears Lubersky LLP) in 1982 and joins Bullard after 15 years at Amburgey & Rubin PC. Pearson received his law degree from Washington and Lee University and his undergraduate degree, *cum laude*, from Wake Forest University.

Kent's addition is an added benefit to the firm's growing specialization in class action wage and hour litigation, one of the largest and most complex areas of litigation in today's legal environment. Jernstedt commented, "The ever-changing regulatory environment in wage and hour law has made it difficult for employers to stay on top of the curve. With the exponential growth in class action litigation, like the Microsoft and Wal-Mart law suits that we have seen in recent years, it becomes increasingly clear that management will have to work especially hard to avoid the pitfalls embedded in this area of the law. Kent is a strong addition to our wage and hour practice and can help us educate and train employers to avoid these problems, and defend them if they get sued."

#### About Bullard Smith Jernstedt Wilson

Founded in 1977 in Portland, Oregon, Bullard Smith Jernstedt Wilson is one of the premier management labor and employment law firms in the Pacific Northwest. The firm has served more than 3,700 clients throughout the United States in both the private and public sectors. The firm is also Oregon's exclusive member of the Worklaw Network – a nationwide network of independent law firms focused exclusively on representing management in labor and employment law matters – including primary areas of concentration in Public and Private Sector Labor Contract Administration and Collective Bargaining, proceedings before the National Labor Relations Board and the Oregon Employment Relations Board, Employment Litigation, and Personnel Policies and Practices. For more information, visit [www.bullardlaw.com](http://www.bullardlaw.com).

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