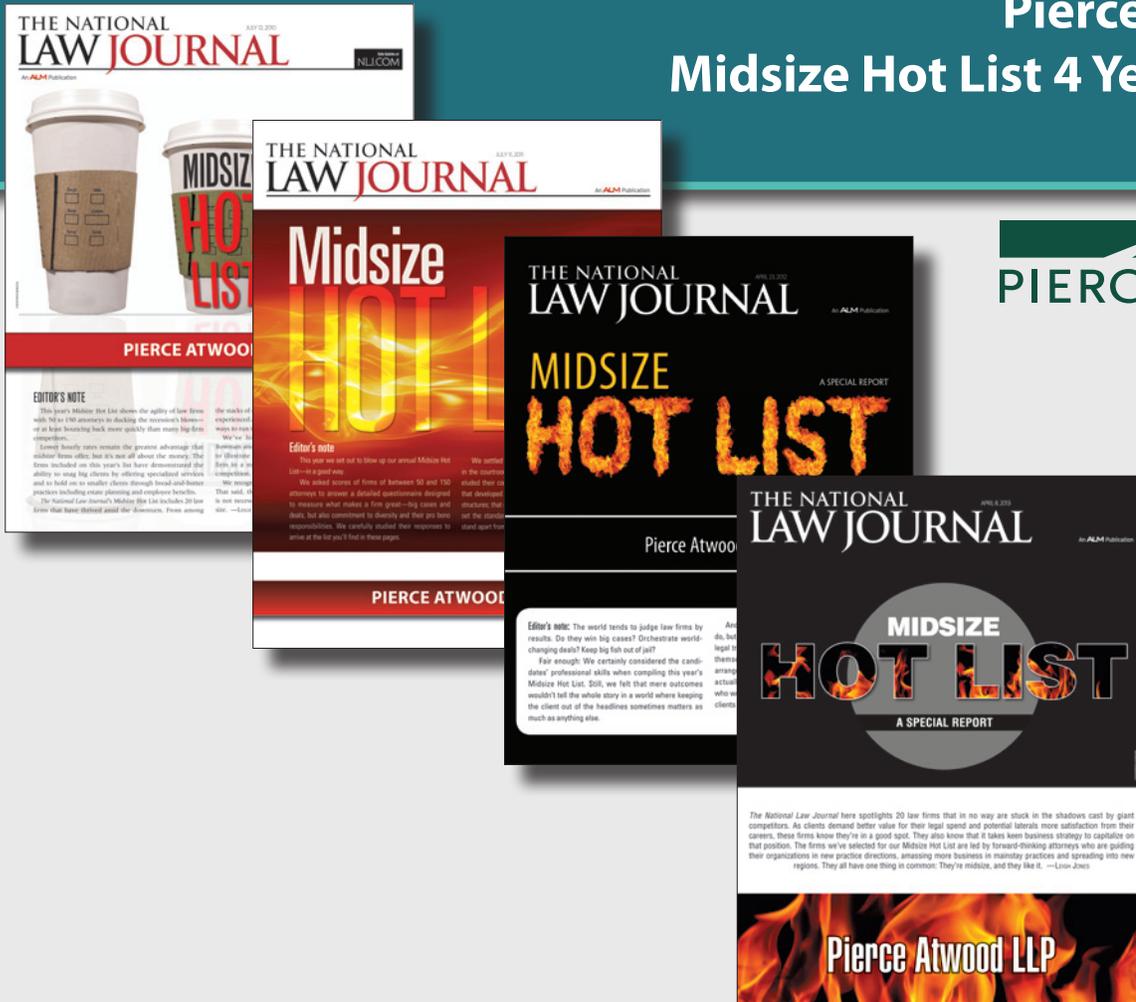


# Pierce Atwood LLP Midsize Hot List 4 Years in a Row!



## PIERCE ATWOOD LLP 2013

Pierce Atwood's roots in Maine stretch back more than 120 years. But as it moves through the 21st century, the Portland, Maine-based firm is looking beyond the Pine Tree State and expanding its reach in New England and Washington.

And it doesn't plan to stop there.

Firm leaders see potential to leverage the expertise of its energy practice into national and global growth. Pierce Atwood's energy expertise dates to around 1919, when Central Maine Power Co., the state's primary utility, became a client.

Today, attorneys in the 140-lawyer firm have represented the state of California in energy matters and worked with the Saudis on an energy project.

One of the ways the energy group has tapped into energy business is through the creation of the Financial Marketers Coalition, designed to give electric energy clients a say on regulatory controversies and a voice in the regulatory process.

Clients can access information via extranet and participate in conference calls with partner Carol Smoots on pressing issues and strategic matters, saving money by sharing resources.

Wes Allen, chief executive officer of Red Wolf Energy Trading LLC in Raleigh, N.C., said the coalition gives small energy-trading

businesses like his a fighting chance against powerful utilities that can afford to hire lobbyists. "Carol has kept our company and companies like us in business for years," Allen said. "If we hadn't been working with Carol in the past 10 years, we wouldn't be around. The utilities would have squeezed us out."

But the firm sees a broader future for itself. Managing partner Gloria Pinza has been hunting for office space in Boston for the burgeoning practices in intellectual property and technology; litigation; and midmarket mergers and acquisitions work. The office opened about six years ago, and the space it leased two years ago is already insufficient to accommodate its 40 employees, 26 of them lawyers.

One way Pierce Atwood holds down its costs is through a closed compensation system, which Pinza said encourages teamwork and collaboration.

"If I know it's just as valuable to the firm to be putting a team together to serve the client as it is for me to claim I individually got that client, the client is best served," she said. "The client wants the right answer from the right person. They don't want 18 layers of people. We think our system enhances that."

—JUNE BELL

## PIERCE ATWOOD LLP 2010

Pierce Atwood is growing beyond its Portland, Maine roots with a tried-and-true formula: bolstering key practice areas in big cities. This spring, the 130-attorney firm added four intellectual property lawyers in Boston. The practice group started out handling transaction and licensing work for Maine organizations. It's now branching into life sciences, energy, electrical and semiconductor IP work.

The firm opened a Washington office a couple of years ago to serve the growing energy sector. Washington clients include

JPMorgan Chase; public utility holding company Unitil Corp.; and oil and natural gas producer XTO Energy Inc.

Alternative billing has helped add new clients, and the firm's Catalyst Program, which offers low or deferred fees to select startup companies, led to new clients including Advanced Cell Technology Inc. and film production company Gum Spirits Productions. The firm's other offices are in Augusta, Maine; Portsmouth, N.H.; Providence, R.I.; and Stockholm, Sweden.

—SHERI QUALTERS

## PIERCE ATWOOD LLP 2011

Courtroom prowess and a mix of specialty practices like energy, intellectual property and banking compliance have propelled Portland, Maine's Pierce Atwood to regional and growing national renown.

The 133-lawyer firm has opened offices in Boston; Providence, R.I.; and Washington since 2006. The Boston office is a special priority, said managing partner Gloria Pinza. "We feel that we are, and are growing into, a very, very strong regional firm, and Boston is a hub of that region," Pinza said.

Among its recent matters, Pierce helped supermarket chain Hannaford Bros. Co. win dismissal of all claims in a multidistrict litigation stemming from a data breach. An appeal is pending, but the case put the firm on the map for privacy and data-breach work.

The firm helped Central Maine Power Co. negotiate technology and services agreements to install a smart-meter project that's now in the installation phase. "It's one of the first ones in the country," Pinza said. "It involved a combination of IP and energy lawyers." It helped the same client win approval of a \$1.4 billion transmission upgrade. The firm negotiated the agreements behind Maine's HealthInfoNet, one of the first statewide health information exchanges.

One of Pierce's signature pro bono relationships is with Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders. The firm reviewed every Maine law for its disparate benefit to straight partners in a failed push for same-sex marriage. "We will be there for them again," partner Cathy Connors said of the issue.

—SHERI QUALTERS

## PIERCE ATWOOD LLP 2012

Pierce Atwood grew up alongside the paper companies of Maine. That meant building a strong natural resources and environmental practice and then expanding from there to meet client demand. Today the firm is known for its energy, intellectual property, privacy and data-security practices—and for its expanding presence.

"We think of ourselves as a New England regional firm that has some national and international practices," said managing partner Gloria Pinza.

The firm has seven offices—Portland and Augusta, Maine; Boston; Portsmouth, N.H.; Providence, R.I.; Washington; and Stockholm, Sweden. Portland is the largest. Keeping most of its lawyers in Maine makes for a lower cost structure, Pinza said.

"We've expanded our footprint, and we want to make sure that our client base remains robust," Pinza said. "Having a large footprint helps our value proposition, because we work across offices."

Pierce Atwood shares those economies with clients including Central Maine Power Co. and the state of California. The firm does international energy work for the World Bank and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The Washington office primarily serves the needs of energy clients, backed up by attorneys throughout its other offices. Pierce Atwood attorneys in Washington are experienced in handling matters before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

"We have a lot of clients that are really all over the place," Pinza said. "It's becoming more and more attractive to national companies as they go through the downturn."

### MIDMARKET M&A

The firm has seen growth in its complex litigation practice and midmarket mergers and acquisitions practice, Pinza said.

Last year, Pierce Atwood represented Portsmouth-based investment company Cate Street Capital Inc. in its acquisition of two pulp and paper mills owned by Katahdin Paper Co. in Millinocket and East Millinocket, Maine.

The attorneys on both sides had to navigate the tax finance strategies and environmental liabilities, among other issues. The completion of the transaction jump-started the shuttered mills, allowing 250 workers to start earning paychecks again.

—MATTHEW HUISMAN

The above 2012 article has been excerpted from its entirety. To read the full version, visit <http://www.law.com/jsp/nlj/PubArticleNLJ.jsp?id=1202549566111&thepage=4&slreturn=1>.