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Safford & Baker, private equity fund looking for new firms

Bloomfield Hills-based Safford & Baker PLLC is working with a Bay City private equity fund on building a new generation of advanced materials firms in Michigan and the Midwest.



"This state has always been known for great technology," said Mark McKinley, a Dow Chemical Co. veteran who is co-founder and general partner of the McKinley Technology Equity Fund. "Our specialty niche is being able to take new technologies and provide them commercial services."

McKinley provides the knowledge necessary to build a viable business, while Safford & Baker, a law firm with a long and successful history of helping entrepreneurs get off the ground, provides the legal services entrepreneurs need, from intellectual property protection to agreements with employees to incorporation and fundraising papers. The firm can also act as corporate counsel to the new entity, if needed.

McKinley said it's been his experience that most inventors make poor entrepreneurs and vice versa. "Inventor does not equal entrepreneur, usually," he said. "But add an inventor and an entrepreneur, and you can get a successful business."

The McKinley Fund is looking for opportunities in plastics and advanced materials -- especially plastics and composites that look like natural materials, and high-performance plastics and composites that can stand up to rough conditions and high temperatures, such as under the hood of cars and trucks.

Green technologies are a consideration but not a major focus of the fund: "Environmental stewardship is a consideration in everything we do," McKinley said.

The fund has already closed on its first two investments, the first being a synthetic wood technology developed by Dow Chemical that combines the aesthetic beauty of wood and the no-maintenance durability of engineered performance polymers. The second investment, MPG Tech LLC, was created with Von's Engineering to accelerate the development, distribution and sales of an advanced vehicle exhaust system called the Vector. This technology has been proven to improve fuel economy on large trucks by 5 to 20 percent by essentially eliminating engine back pressure. Safford & Baker handled the documentation of the transactions which closed both deals and is representing each of the portfolio companies as general counsel.

The fund is also finalizing agreements with two more companies, a developer of decorative extruded sheet for store fixtures, commercial furniture and wall panels, and a provider of automotive alternators with a lightweight composite resin housing. Safford & Baker will likely also assist in documenting these transactions and then act as corporate counsel for the newly formed entities.

For more information on the Fund, contact Stacy Pastein at stacypastein@mckinleytechnology.com
More about Safford & Baker and its services at www.SaffordBaker.com or call (248) 646-9100.