

## BANKING/FINANCE

# 'Smart Money' Still Finding Deal Work Opportunities



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Middle-market deals continue at a healthy pace, while real estate, health care and marijuana transactions are flourishing.

by Andrew Maloney

Fears about supply chains, inflation and a full-blown recession this year have crushed deal activity for many firms.

But some are still hiring for, and increasing their output in transactional work—often with a focus on middle-market deals in energy and technology, real estate and distressed debt, plus nascent industries like cannabis.

Through the first half of the year, Am Law 100 firms saw a 0.3% decrease in all corporate work, according to a report from Thomson Reuters. In addition, M&A specifically was down across all segments—Am Law 100 (-2.1%), Am Law 200 (-10.3%) and midsize (-10.2%) firms all saw decreases in demand in that area, according to that same report.

More recently, heavy hitters in the top 25 of M&A league tables saw massive drops in year-over-year deal value—as high as 64%—with only five firms coming out in the black so far this year, according to third-quarter league tables from Refinitiv based on deal value.

Yet there are still bright spots. McDermott Will & Emery recently added three transactional partners from three different firms, boosting the total of number of transactional partner hires in its New York office to 12 for the year so far, and noting that transaction-side demand “continues to hold strong” even in the face of economic uncertainty.

Husch Blackwell has also added 11 lawyers in corporate and transactional practices so far this year, the firm said.

“There’s still a lot of cash sitting around,” firm chair Catherine Hanaway said in an interview. “The smart money is looking for opportunities, and they’re out there.”

Real estate transactions, for example, have been a boon to firms across the industry, growing 6.5% for midsize firms, 5.4% for Am Law 100 firms and 3.9% for Second Hundred firms through the halfway point of 2022.

That’s arguably counterintuitive, with interest rates still increasing and businesses trying to decrease their footprints with the onset of remote work after the pandemic. But Hanaway said that the Husch real estate group is one of many that’s booming because there’s just been a lot of upheaval in that sector.

“All of that has changed to some degree, and change usually results in work for lawyers,” she said in an interview. “And I think that’s what’s driving it at this point. There are so many reconfigurations going on in real estate.”

Firms with more strategic M&A work in the pipeline, relative to those who have deep relationships with big private equity firms, are also maintaining deal flow, some experts say. University of Iowa law professor Robert T. Miller, who researches corporate and securities law, told *The American Lawyer* last week that large PE clients aren’t buying when the debt markets are closed.

However, firms that have focused on smaller PE clients have seen some success this year.

O’Melveny & Myers is one of the few top firms that increased its deal value from last year, going from \$49 billion in deals touched to just over \$90 billion in 2022, an 82% increase, according to the league table data.

M&A group chair Eric Zabinski also told *The American Lawyer* last week that the firm’s performance is a reflection of success in middle-market deals in technology, media and energy, as well as cross-border investments, midmarket private equity and venture-backed emerging clients.

Indeed, Bill Josten, strategic content manager for Thomson Reuters, said that many firms are still seeing very strong demand in private equity work, which he called “relatively inflation-proof.”

“It’s not reliant on a lot of the same funding sources as M&A, which is slowing down because of the rising cost of money, both in terms of how you fund it and businesses’ desire to do it,” Josten said in late September, adding: “Maybe there’s an opportunity to deploy lawyers in private equity work that historically would’ve done M&A.”

Hanaway, the Husch leader, said the lawyers they’ve added this year illustrate specifically what types of deals have been busy for them, with specialists in renewable energy—particularly as the federal Inflation Reduction Act is set to reshape the industry—health care and marijuana transactions being hot commodities.

“And those three areas, among others, continue to experience very strong growth. The Inflation Reduction Act has more money in it than any renewable energy program in history. So that money is all coming, that space will be very aggressive,” she said. “More states continue to legalize cannabis or liberalize their health care laws. And states with aging populations—those trendlines aren’t reversing.”

**Andrew Maloney covers the business of law, focusing on national and global law firms. Contact him at [amaloney@alm.com](mailto:amaloney@alm.com).**



## CITY OF DORAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

All residents, property owners and other interested parties are hereby notified of a **COUNCIL ZONING MEETING** on **October 26, 2022 beginning at 6:00 PM** to consider the proposed site plan for the property located at 2525 NW 82 Avenue. The meeting will be held at the **City of Doral, Government Center, Council Chambers** located at 8401 NW 53rd Terrace, Doral, Florida, 33166.

The City of Doral proposes to adopt the following Resolution:

### RESOLUTION No. 22-

**A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DORAL, FLORIDA, APPROVING THE SITE PLAN MODIFICATION FOR EWE WAREHOUSE INVESTMENTS XXXII, LTD. FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 2525 NW 82 AVENUE, DORAL, FLORIDA 33122 PURSUANT TO SECTION 53-184(F) OF THE CITY'S LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE**

**HEARING NO.:** 22-10-DOR-01

**APPLICANT:** EWE Warehouse Investments XXXII, LTD (the "Applicant")

**PROJECT NAME:** Legacy at Doral

**PROPERTY OWNER:** EWE Warehouse Investments XXXII, LTD

**LOCATION:** 2525 NW 82 Avenue, Doral, Florida 33122

**FOLIO NUMBER:** 35-3027-024-0010

**SIZE OF PROPERTY:** ±9.26 acres

**FUTURE LAND USE MAP DESIGNATION:** Doral Décor District

**ZONING DESIGNATION:** Industrial District (I) and Doral Décor Overlay District (DDOD)

**REQUEST:** The Applicant proposes to develop a six (6) story residential building with a parking garage, which will also include amenity space, on the west portion of the Property consisting of 185 dwelling units.

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** Tract "A" of "NORTON TIRE COMPANY", according to the Plat thereof recorded in Plat Book 127, at Page 90, of the Public Records of Dade County, Florida

**LESS:**

The Westerly 2.00 feet thereof;

**AND LESS:**

The external area of a circular curve lying within said Tract "A", being concave to the Northeast, having a radius of 25 feet and tangent to a line 2.00 feet East of and parallel to the West Line of said Tract "A", and tangent to the South Line of said Tract "A".

### Location Map



Inquiries regarding the item may be directed to the Planning and Zoning Department at 305-59-DORAL. The application file may be examined at the City of Doral Planning and Zoning Department located at 8401 NW 53 Terrace, Doral, FL 33166.

Pursuant to Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes, if a person decides to appeal any decisions made by the City Council with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings and, for such purpose, may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. This notice does not constitute consent by the City for introduction or admission of otherwise inadmissible or irrelevant evidence, nor does it authorize challenges or appeals not otherwise allowed by law. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person who are disabled and who need special accommodations to participate in this meeting because of that disability should contact the Planning and Zoning Department at 305-59-DORAL no later than three (3) business days prior to the proceeding.

Connie Diaz, MMC  
City Clerk  
City of Doral

10/12

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