

Press Release

Akerman Adds Transactional Partner Howard Gelt to Denver Office

July 16, 2015

Akerman LLP, a top 100 U.S. law firm serving clients across the Americas, today announced the growth of the Denver office with partner and transactional lawyer Howard Gelt. He builds upon Akerman's core strengths in complex real estate and corporate transactions, and brings a new dimension of experience in economic development, transportation and project financing. With the addition of Gelt, Akerman expands the national footprint of its Real Estate Practice Group, one of the five largest in the country.

"We continue to see growing demand from clients for exceptional lawyers like Howard, who know the local market and who have significant experience in multi-state transactions and high-priority development projects," said [Richard Bezold](#), chair of Akerman's Real Estate Practice Group. "We are very excited to begin working with Howard, who will provide additional business insights to our clients and help us forge meaningful relationships in Denver and beyond."

Gelt is a trusted advisor to business owners and developers in legal and business matters. He regularly represents clients in commercial and residential real estate development and transactions, handling sales and acquisitions, zoning and land use issues, public and private financing, construction matters, and operations. He has served as lead

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counsel for a number of high-profile master-planned, multifamily, and mixed use projects in Colorado and across the United States.

Gelt also represents a range of clients from general counsel to entrepreneurs in corporate matters, including mergers and acquisitions, debt and finance transactions. He draws from his experience as a former president and CEO of a \$40 million-per-year retail company.

Gelt also has an extensive background in economic development and transportation issues, assisting clients with regulatory, legislative, and litigation matters related to infrastructure development and financing opportunities. He previously served as chairman of the Metro North Chamber of Commerce and on the board of governors of the Metropolitan Denver Economic Development Corporation. He is currently a member of the Metropolitan Denver Economic Development Corporation and the State of Colorado Economic Development Commission. His civic involvement in a number of priority development projects and initiatives has solidified his relationships with key elected officials and business leaders in the metro Denver area.

In addition to his legal practice, economic development and civic duties, Gelt has been active in a variety of political activities throughout his career, including serving on the senior staff for Governor Richard D. Lamm, as the chairman of the political action committee for Mayor Federico Pena, as the chairman of the finance committee for Governor Roy Romer, and as the chairman of the Colorado State Democratic Party and a key member of the Clinton for Colorado Committee. He is currently a member of the finance committee for U.S. Senator Michael Bennet.

Denver marks the Real Estate Practice Group's latest expansion across the western region of the United States. The team recently welcomed real estate transactional partner Jane Hinton and associate

Herman Enayati to the Los Angeles office, just weeks after real estate transactional partner Sue Zabloudil was appointed Akerman's Los Angeles office managing partner.

The American Lawyer reported Akerman as the top U.S. law firm for lateral partner hires, with the largest percentage increase of total partnership in the 2014 fiscal year. The real estate team in particular experienced explosive growth, increasing more than 11 percent last year, with key additions in Los Angeles, Miami, and New York, among other markets. *Law360* ranked the firm's national Real Estate Practice Group among the five largest in the United States and globally.

About Akerman LLP

Akerman LLP is a leading transactions and trial law firm known for its core strengths in middle market M&A, within the financial services and real estate industries, and for a diverse Latin America practice. With more than 600 lawyers and government affairs professionals and a network of 20 offices, it is ranked among the top 100 law firms in the United States by *The American Lawyer* (2015) and *The National Law Journal* NLJ 350 (2015). Akerman also is ranked among the top 50 law firms for diversity in *The American Lawyer's* Diversity Scorecard (2015).

The Akerman Real Estate Practice Group offers comprehensive and fully integrated project counsel services to clients across the United States and in Latin America. With substantial industry experience and local market insights, Akerman represents clients in complex real estate transactions and financings, development and redevelopment projects, public private initiatives and litigation. Recognized as a national tier one law firm for Real Estate and Construction Law by *U.S. News - Best Lawyers* (2015), the group advises investors, developers, builders, lenders, retailers, owners and corporate end users, often in high profile matters.