

**For Immediate Release**

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**Raising the Bar for Law Firms:**  
How one local firm must regularly earn its stripes by  
proving it meets the highest standards and quality service

*Fresno, California; August 5, 2009*) – The practice of law requires years of schooling, successfully completing the bar exam, complying with a distinct code of ethics, and hours of ongoing continuing legal education. However, for Fresno-based Baker Manock & Jensen, PC, those tests are just the beginning. In addition, the firm further puts itself to the test through a diligent review process that includes exacting self-assessment, peer review by other law firms, and client comments provided to a third party.

These tests are part-and-parcel of Baker Manock & Jensen’s membership in Meritas, a closely integrated group of full-service law firms that provide business clients with worldwide access to comprehensive legal services. Membership in Meritas is by invitation only, with only one firm admitted for each selected geographic marketplace. Members are ranked among the top firms in most cities.

As part of its drive to ensure continued high caliber legal services among its nearly 200 member firms worldwide, Meritas also stipulates a periodic recertification process as a requirement for membership. Baker Manock & Jensen was recently awarded recertification.

“Members must prove that they meet these high standards just to be admitted, but those who don’t pass recertification, don’t remain members,” said Jeff Jaech. “You’re not given a passing grade on a de facto basis; every firm must re-earn their membership by proving they continue to adhere to Meritas’ high quality standards.”

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The recertification process examines such factors as adherence to rigorous standards set by clients, the timeliness and quality of a firm's client service and its professional conduct. That translates into such specifics as enabling clients to benefit from multijurisdictional client management teams, and cross border practice groups; a requirement that firms acknowledge Meritas client phone calls, letters, faxes and e-mails within 24 hours; and for international members, that they employ English-speaking receptionists and after-hours message services or voicemail in English.

"For our firm, Meritas' recertification process gives us a framework to continually monitor and address the quality of our services," said Jeff Jaech. "That alone is valuable to clients, but our membership in Meritas also means we can provide clients -- from the smallest business to the largest corporations -- with access to legal expertise in all parts of the globe. As more companies do business worldwide, both large and small companies alike are finding they need coordinated, trustworthy global legal services. It used to be that the only options for companies were to build up their own in-house legal department, use large national firms, or develop personal networks of preferred legal providers. But the big national or international firms don't operate everywhere, the quality can be very uneven and the fees can be excessive. Through Meritas, Baker Manock & Jensen can provide clients with coordinated, cost-effective services to meet their legal needs using law firms that adhere to the same high quality standards."

Baker Manock & Jensen is one of Central California's largest law firms. In operation since 1903, we are located in Fresno yet some of our specialty practices are statewide. Our primary focus is on serving private businesses, and their owners and executives. We are known for our expertise in certain industries such as agriculture, food processing and manufacturing, and in certain disciplines such as water, tax, trusts and estates, and for our commitment to quality and integrity. We have both experienced litigators and transaction lawyers. Visit our Web site at [www.bakermanock.com](http://www.bakermanock.com).