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Boyle Fredrickson Attorney Comments on Maximizing the Value of an IP Portfolio at WISACCA Conference

MILWAUKEE— Boyle Fredrickson shareholder Michael Brayer collaborated with Zhibin Ren of Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company to discuss how companies can maximize the value provided by their intellectual property portfolios using real world examples of business method patents. Their presentation was part of the 2010 annual conference of the Wisconsin Chapter of the Association of Corporate Counsel (WISACCA).

In their presentation, “What Every In-House Lawyer Needs to Know about Using IP Portfolios,” Brayer and Ren outlined how the insurance industry and other industries across the spectrum are beginning to see a surge in the number of business method patents issued, as well as the number of business method patents applied for by competing corporations. As such, they forecasted that these patents will increasingly affect the manner in which companies conduct their business, particularly since the number of infringement litigation cases revolving around such patents would also continue to rise.

“Business patent disputes can be particularly costly,” Brayer explained. “For high profile cases, it has not been uncommon to see attorney fees escalate into the millions. Additionally, the damages in some well-known cases like Research In Motion (\$600M), Hartford Financial Services Group (\$80M), and Transamerica Insurance and Investment Group (\$13M) can be extraordinary. It is important for companies that place a high value on the intellectual property behind their methodologies and processes to have a strong understanding of how existing and potential patents can impact their specific business. Companies can often structure their patent portfolio specifically to capitalize on or even avoid these types of disputes.”

Business method patents are designed to protect various researched and developed methods of conducting business. According to Brayer, they serve a unique niche in the patent world, as business method patents tend to have an important impact on how commercial activity is conducted. These patents are most often issued for automated financial or data management processing methods.

In addition to business process method patents, Brayer and Ren discussed IP usage trends in expanding and contracting markets, how to convert intellectual property into revenue, and details behind obtaining particular types of patents, copyrights, and trademarks.

About Boyle Fredrickson

With 23 attorneys specializing in intellectual property law, Boyle Fredrickson is Wisconsin’s largest intellectual property law firm. Since its inception in December 1999, Boyle Fredrickson’s attorneys have filed more than 4,100 domestic patent applications, 1,700 foreign patent applications and 400 Patent Cooperating Treaty (PCT) applications. The firm, which has also filed more than 1,600 domestic trademark applications and 400 foreign trademark applications, handles all aspects of intellectual property law, including patent, trademark and copyright prosecution; foreign intellectual property protection; trade secret and unfair competition protection; information technology and e-commerce law; and all related licensing and litigation.

Boyle Fredrickson has been honored with several local business achievement awards, including being named one of Milwaukee’s “Fastest Growing Firms.” The Milwaukee Metropolitan Association of Commerce also honored Boyle Fredrickson as a “Future 50 Winner” in 2007, 2008 and 2009.

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