

Group benefits firm opens two Md. offices as it begins wider expansion on East Coast

Rockville, Owings Mills locations give company with ADP partnership new territory to cover

By Bob Graham

JAVERS GROUP, A Philadelphia, Pa.-based group benefits and human resources management company, is expanding into the Baltimore-Washington, D.C. area as part of a three-year plan to expand into 25 cities in the Eastern United States.



Chris Wichser

The company just opened offices in Rockville, Md., a Washington suburb, and Owings Mills, Md., a suburb of Baltimore.

A 5-year-old partnership with ADP has Javers providing all employee benefits and some backup support

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company. Javers' footprint is following ADP's plans.

Further fueling growth is the economy, which has forced a number of companies to eliminate their human resources function or look for increased outside help.

Benefitting from tough economy

"The economy has done wonders for us," Chris Wichser, founder and president of Javers, told IFA. "What we offer is different from the traditional spreadsheet-based approach," Wichser said, differentiating himself from traditional insurance agents selling benefits packages, who often bid for projects.

overall expansion plan over the next two years. By June, the company is expecting to open an office in Charlotte, N.C., to serve the area from Raleigh, N.C., to the north to Columbia, S.C., to the south. Another office should open in Melville, N.Y., to serve the Long Island area.

Big East Coast plans

By 2013, additional Javers Group offices are planned for Atlanta, Chicago, Cleveland, Miami, New Orleans, Northern New Jersey, Tampa and other cities in the eastern part of the U.S., Wichser said.

He said the company typically either opens a two-person office in the city or makes an acquisition. Acquisition targets

"We work with the company every week and we offer a full range of services that appeals to companies trying to do more with less," he said.

Increased compliance requirements, the effects on employers of federal health reform legislation passed in 2010 and greater reliance on technology also are spurring growth, he said.

For Javers Group, the ideal client is between 100 and 1,000 employees. The company has 10 offices from Upstate New York to Washington, D.C., where the wealth in and around the Capitol Beltway area, including Northern Virginia, appeals to both Javers Group and ADP, Wichser said.

But the Baltimore-Washington expansion is a first step toward the company's would be a company generating between \$500,000 and \$800,000 a year with ownership in its 30s and 40s, Wichser said.

"We want companies that are ready for

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Targets for Javers Group to consider acquiring must have:

- Owners in 30s or 40s who want an equity stake
- Annual revenue of \$500,000-\$800,000
- Willingness to "take the next step"

Source: Chris Wichser, Javers Group.

that next step, where the owners want to keep an equity position and be involved as we provide them with the technology and all the other things we offer," he said. Wichser added that the company would welcome contact from companies interested in being acquired. ■