Draw up the papers...in Chinese...Mandarin and Cantonese...traditional and simple...by the end of business Thursday.

Research, technology, manufacturing and service firms throughout Somerset County, the United States and the world are stoking the red-hot global economy, creating jobs and furthering opportunity for growth and expansion.

And where there is business, lawyers are needed.

The global economy is creating a growing need for legal counsel well-versed in handling matters outside the United States. Locally this demand is a reflection of the ever-growing dynamics and sophistication of international trade and a continuing dependence of the local economy on the multi-national pharmaceutical and technology firms expanding their presence in central New Jersey.

Bob Gabrielski, a partner in Norris, McLaughlin & Marcus, Bridgewater, specializes in business law and has several clients whose business interests extend thousands of miles beyond central New Jersey.

“We’re doing an increasing amount of work for clients overseas,” Gabrielski said. “It has been growing for a good number of years. One of my partners is working with a London company making acquisitions in the states. We have a central New Jersey client, a CEO, on a trip to China looking at a potential transaction.”

The firm is the largest in Somerset County, with 110 lawyers.

Donald DiFrancesco, the former acting-Governor of New Jersey, is managing partner of DiFrancesco, Bateman, Coley, Yospin, Kunzman, Davis & Lehrer, P.C., in Warren. He oversees the work of 40 lawyers who comprise the county’s second largest law firm.

DeFrancesco states that larger firms cannot grow their business substantially without looking for opportunities beyond their traditional service.

“We’re trying to become more of a corporate-oriented law firm,” he said. “We’re trying to expand our practice to encompass business beyond the borders of New Jersey. We do have an interest in international law and companies that are more global. We’re trying to grow into that on a very slow basis.

“From a business perspective, having a larger corporate practice with a global exposure is more lucrative,” DeFrancesco explained. “You can command a higher rate per hour for your attorney, more than you can, say, representing a municipality on land use issues. It helps when every year every-
body gets a raise, bonuses, health costs go up, the rent goes up. In order to deal with that you have to increase revenues every year. Our average per hour rate goes up by having a more lucrative corporate practice with clients whose interests extend overseas.”

Gabrielski said his firm works with foreign companies that come to the United States to do business, but are not familiar with the processes and nuances of state and federal laws.

“We have quite a number of substantial clients who do international business,” he said. “Some are based here, others around the world. Numerous times, different issues come up with the companies from foreign countries that want to do business in New Jersey—questions about environmental, labor, tax, securities laws. Those people need help.

“The corollary to that is we represent clients who want to do outbound transactions, whether it be exporting or they want to explore setting up a manufacturing facility in Latin America or China.”

Added DeFrancesco, “From a global perspective, there’s a much greater emphasis on marketing than when I first started practicing, particularly in the Northeast, because of the diversity we have, not only the people but the corporate firms.

“They’re merging, expanding, and that affects corporations here. Whether they have interests in China, Europe or Canada, law firms are getting bigger and more diverse to deal with those issues and provide the needed services.”

Norris, McLaughlin & Marcus moved aggressively to position itself in the international legal community in 1990 when the firm was invited to join Meritas, a nonprofit alliance of a select group of 170 law firms in 60 countries that become members by invitation-only. Norris is the only New Jersey firm in Meritas.

It was a strategic move that continues to pay off, as the firm receives calls from its counterparts in Europe and South America and, increasingly, China and Pacific Rim countries.

DiFrancesco’s firm, an affiliate of New York City law firm Bivona Cohen with multi-national clients, has had success in the international arena, as well. David Wadyka, a partner in the firm, represents the United States interests of Konica Minolta, a multinational Japanese firm.

“We deal with their medical imaging subsidiary here in the United States,” he explained. “What we have been doing increasingly is setting up dealerships and distributors in Central and South America.

**The global economy is creating a growing need for legal counsel well-versed in handling matters outside the United States.**

“We’re doing work in Panama, the Dominican Republic, Brazil and Mexico and I suspect we’ll be doing a lot more work in that part of the world. A lot of these countries create legal challenges for us; it’s an interesting area. We deal with local attorneys in Brazil, in Panama, mostly by e-mail. They also speak English besides Portuguese and Spanish.

“One of the more interesting things is you have documents prepared in English,” Wadyka continued. “Some use are prepared in Japan, in Japonesese, which then have to be translated into English and then better English. When they get down to Brazil, it has to be translated into Portuguese. Three countries, three different languages, the idiomatic translation is something you have to deal with.

“I know what our counsel in Brazil is telling us, but we need his local knowledge. They know we may be able to read the law, but how it is actually applied are two different things.”

Through Bivona Cohen, Wadyka, a former state deputy attorney general, also is working with a law firm in London as a criminal law consultant on an international fraud case.

“I wouldn’t market myself as an international lawyer just yet, but these are examples of how this firm is getting involved,” Wadyka said. “We’re not just doing land use anymore.

“We have clients here in central New Jersey who are international in scope and they are using us to do more and more things that are international in scope. There has been a big increase in our exposure to business concerns that are global in nature. As we learn about the other countries’ legal systems, our expertise expands.”

Networking and establishing contacts also help to nurture future business prospects, according to Wadyka. For example, the Konica Minolta initiative began when Wadyka started to build a network of distributors in Brazil and Panama.

“We contacted a distributor who agreed to carry the product,” he explained. “They referred us to their lawyer who referred us to another attorney. That referral cemented that relationship.”

Gabrielski and Norris, McLaughlin & Marcus’ marketing director, Ed Miller, recently returned from a seminar hosted by Meritas in San Francisco, where they spent considerable time prospecting, laying the groundwork for future business and meeting foreign affiliates, particularly attorneys from China and countries on the Pacific Rim.

“I think there’s the prospect of doing more work there,” Gabrielski said. “China is a growing market, but culturally, economically it’s different in some regards. They’re trying to get a handle on free enterprise, yet they’re a communist country. How do you deal with that kind of system?”

The continuing exchange of information and face-to-face contact with counterparts in foreign countries can only encourage and expedite future business deals for law firms’ clients, Gabrielski said.

Even little things—such as tips on cultural differences—can prove fruitful.

“These contacts are invaluable, especially when it comes to cultural issues,” he said. “There are some things that are just different, like in Thailand. You don’t want to shake hands with people in Thailand. It’s considered an insult. Information like that is helpful.”

**Redigir os papeis—draw up the papers.**