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For Immediate Release

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**Seminar on ‘employee rights of privacy in the Digital Age’
by Pannone Lopes Devereaux & West Partner William E. O’Gara, scheduled
for RI Trust Annual Dinner Meeting, Jan. 21**

Providence, RI (January 20, 2010) – Employee privacy rights in the workplace and e-communications – issues presently before the US Supreme Court – are topics of a seminar by Pannone Lopes Devereaux & West LLC (PLDW) partner and employment law expert William E. O’Gara, at the annual meeting of the RI Interlocal Risk Management Trust (The Trust), January 21, at the Crown Plaza at the Crossing in Warwick, RI.

O’Gara and PLDW Senior Counsel Brian J. Lamoureux will present a comprehensive overview on “Instant Communications and Workplace Law” – one of the hottest topics regarding the rights of employers and employees in light of the explosion of social networking, text messages, emails and all other methods of electronic messaging in the public and private sector.

“There are no questions about the timeliness and importance of the issue to every employer and to their employees,” said O’Gara. “We are on the cusp of what could be a far-reaching determination by the US Supreme Court as to the rights and responsibilities of employers and employees in the Digital Age workplace.”

O’Gara and Lamoureux will present at a pre-dinner seminar to members of The Trust, an intergovernmental insurance risk-sharing pool owned by its members and organized as a non-profit entity in 1986 through the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns to develop affordable insurance solutions for Rhode Island’s local governmental entities. Today, The Trust consists of 32 Rhode Island municipalities, 31 Rhode Island school districts and 56 Rhode Island Special Purpose Districts.

As part of the interactive seminar presentation, O’Gara and Lamoureux will discuss the US Supreme Court case, *City of Ontario v. Quon*, which was heard by a panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit – the first of its kind – about a California police officer who charged that he had a reasonable expectation of privacy to his e-messages even though he was using a device owned by the City because his employer lacked a strict policy regarding e-communications. The employer’s claimed entitlement to the messages is directly at odds with Quon’s concerns about his right to privacy in his personal text messages. In the 9th Circuit, it was

determined “that (his employer’s) decision to read the messages without a suspicion of wrongdoing on the part of the officer violated Fourth Amendment protections against unreasonable searches.”

The US Supreme Court is set to hear the case in the spring; the outcome of which may determine the future of how employees can expect privacy when sharing information in the Digital Age. According to recent newspaper articles about the pending decision that is targeted to public sector employees and employers, the decision, “if broadly written could hold a blueprint for private-workplace rules” as well.

The latest research by the prestigious PEW Internet & American Life Project, found that nearly one in five Internet users is tweeting on Twitter or using another service to share personal and business updates and information, or to see updates about others.

“The use of electronic technology in communicating by employees is here to stay,” said O’Gara. “Business owners are hard-pressed to control the use of these social networking platforms in the workplace and need to consider the legal consequences of *not* having personnel policies in place prior to making decisions. The decision by the US Supreme Court may be the tipping point as to how employers maintain control – economically – over their employee’s time and expenses while on the job.”

For further information, contact PLDW Director of Administration David C. Sweet at 401-824-5100 or Colleen M. Bodziony, The Trust Membership Services Manager at 401-438-6511 ext. 512 or visit www.pldw.com or www.ritrust.com to learn more about both companies.

ABOUT PANNONE LOPES DEVEREAUX & WEST LLC

The attorneys and staff of Pannone Lopes Devereaux & West LLC (PLDW) strive to serve both their clients and the community responsibly and with integrity at all times. With offices in Rhode Island, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York and Florida, PLDW combines national expertise with cost-effective strategies and focuses its practice in the areas of administrative law, corporate, municipal and criminal law, civil litigation, government, health care and estate planning. With more than one hundred twenty years of combined experience and having practiced in an international law firm setting, the partners act with unparalleled responsiveness and have an authentic appreciation for their clients and the community in which they serve. PLDW is a law firm dedicated to improving the quality of life in the community and toward that end devotes considerable resources and talent to non-profit organizations in the regions it serves. For more information, visit www.pldw.com. PLDW is proud to be selected as a *Best Places to Work* by Providence Business News two years in a row.

ABOUT THE RHODE ISLAND INTERLOCAL RISK MANAGEMENT TRUST

The Trust is focused exclusively on Rhode Island public sector entities and by virtue of the State Enabling Legislation allowing it to exist, no other type of business interest can be pursued. Because of this singular focus, The Trust is the only insurance and risk management provider in Rhode Island that has the know-how, experience, and tools necessary to provide public sector entities — municipalities, school districts, and special purpose districts— with highly specialized risk management solutions designed to help reduce claims and minimize losses. Three attorneys on our staff bring extensive experience and insight into the special liability and constitutional issues often raised by public sector claims. Trust-appointed defense counsel and Trust staff Claims Representatives are specialists in public

sector law in areas such as constitutional questions, sovereign immunity, tort caps, statutory immunities, and various related legal principles and doctrines. For more information on The Trust, visit www.ritrust.com.

ABOUT THE SPEAKERS:

William O’Gara is one of the founding partners at Pannone Lopes Devereaux & West LLC and is a highly respected labor and employment law practitioner who also has significant experience in litigating civil and administrative law matters before federal and state courts, the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Occupational Safety and Health, the Rhode Island Commission for Human Rights and the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination. Mr. O’Gara represents employers in matters ranging from sexual harassment to retirement issues. His diverse practice includes defending wrongful termination and discrimination actions as well as contract negotiations and matters of union representation. Mr. O’Gara is a frequent contributor and editor of human resource and personnel policy handbooks and guides for small and large private and public sector entities.

Brian J. Lamoureux is Senior Counsel with Pannone Lopes Devereaux & West LLC and is an accomplished business litigator with more than 10 years of experience in commercial litigation matters. He practices before state, federal and bankruptcy courts in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. His areas of expertise include complex commercial litigation, creditors’ rights, surety law, construction law, telecommunications zoning, structured settlement transfers, and student loan bankruptcy matters. He successfully briefed and argued before the First Circuit Court of Appeals in a case regarding a surety’s rights to indemnification. He was lead counsel in a successfully resolved certified class action regarding the demutualization of an insurance company before the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Rhode Island, and served as trial co-counsel in one of the largest defense jury verdicts in the Federal District Court in Massachusetts.