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## Cox Smith Shareholders to Form Energy Firm

**Pending Cox Smith Matthews merger with Dykema was a factor in timing of departure of oil, gas and energy trio who formed Santoyo Moore Wehmeyer.**

BY **BRENDA SAPINO JEFFREYS**

With Cox Smith Matthews of San Antonio set to merge May 1 with Dykema, three shareholders have left Cox Smith to form a small firm to represent energy clients.

Paul Santoyo, Katy Pier Moore and Corey Wehmeyer established Santoyo Moore Wehmeyer of San Antonio on March 30. Two former Cox Smith associates, Christopher West and Benjamin Robertson, also joined the new firm.

Moore said the trio of partners, who practiced together in Cox Smith's oil, gas and energy law section, have been talking about starting their own firm for a year. Cox Smith's March 30 announcement that it will merge with Detroit-based Dykema was "a factor" in the decision to start the new firm, Moore added.

"We felt that pulled us in that direction, to a smaller firm, more



**(From left) Attorneys Corey F. Wehmeyer, Katy Pier Moore and Paul Santoyo of Santoyo Moore Wehmeyer in San Antonio**

focused both geographically and by industry," she said.

Moore declined to identify the clients of her new firm, but she said they include publicly traded and privately held exploration and production companies.

When asked for a comment on the departures, Deborah Williamson, managing director of Cox

Smith, wrote: "The combination with Dykema is the right move for Cox Smith and our clients. Although attrition is sometimes the result of a combination, oil, gas and energy has always been and will continue to be one of our core strengths—in San Antonio, in Texas, and nationally."