

John C. Pietila

President, Dentons Davis Brown



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Overview

John practices primarily in the areas of Telecommunications, Agribusiness, Corporate, and Mergers and Acquisitions. He assists clients in managing risks and capitalizing on opportunities associated with innovative business strategies and evolving regulatory frameworks. He frequently serves as outside general counsel and helping boards of directors across multiple industries, advising clients on ongoing strategic, transactional, corporate and regulatory matters.

Mergers, Acquisitions and Business Opportunities

John advises clients in connection with strategic transactions and joint ventures, including a wide range of mergers, acquisitions, and investments. He works closely with clients to understand their business objectives and to assist in developing and implementing successful acquisition, investment, and exit strategies.

Financing and Rural Economic Development

John assists clients in connection with negotiating and structuring credit facilities and targeted equity investments to finance current operations and future growth. Much of his work involves financing for rural telecommunications companies, agribusiness companies, and other businesses which create or facilitate growth through investment in rural America, including through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Programs and USDA Rural Utilities Service (RUS) lending programs.

Telecommunications and Emerging Technologies

John works closely with wireline and wireless telecommunications companies, cable television providers, broadband providers and other communications and technology companies in a wide range of business, regulatory, policy, contractual and transactional matters. He supports clients as they navigate rapid and game-changing shifts in business strategy and regulatory policy, including the evolution of Internet Protocol (IP)-enabled networks, the convergence of fixed and mobile services and the expansion of effective competition. John is general counsel for the Iowa Communications Alliance and is current Chair of the Legal Committee for NTCA - The Rural Broadband Association.

John has served as President of the Dentons Davis Brown Board of Directors since 2019.

Experience

Mergers, Acquisitions and Business Opportunities

John has recently represented a:

- Buyer in the strategic acquisition of a diversified Iowa RLEC, including CLEC, wireless and cable television business units.
- Seller in the sale of a fiber-based communications network and data center facilities.
- Buyer in the strategic acquisition of Iowa exchange areas and transport network owned by a price cap carrier.
- Multistate hog production company in a liquidating reorganization of real estate and operating assets.
- Tier 3 wireless carrier in connection with the sale of wireless spectrum and operating assets to a Tier 1 wireless carrier.
- Commodity trade association in the co-development and commercialization of a privately developed crop insurance product.
- Private equity fund in connection with convertible debt financing and strategic equity investments in start-up and early-stage communications and technology companies.

Financing and Rural Economic Development

John has recently represented a:

- Borrower in obtaining a RUS Telecommunications Loan to fund the expansion of fiber-based telecommunications services in its Iowa service areas.
- Lender in making a Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) Program loan to fund the expansion of a local manufacturer's production and distribution facilities.
- A liquid egg producer in connection with refinancing of existing debt and additional credit facilities to fund a cage free expansion.
- Rural broadband providers in applying for and obtaining loans and grants under the USDA ReConnect Loan and Grant Program and the Iowa Office of Chief Information Officer Empower Rural Iowa Broadband Grant Program.

Telecommunications and Emerging Technologies

John has recently represented:

- A group of Iowa RLECs in the organization of a joint venture entity to develop and enhance joint operating strategies, leverage operating and network assets and achieve economies of scale across their business operations.
- Telecommunications and broadband service providers in the development of residential and business and enterprise service contracts, terms and conditions of service and acceptable use and data privacy policies.
- Rural telecommunications companies and broadband providers before the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the Iowa Utilities Board (IUB) and in the courts in matters arising out of the Telecommunications Act and state telecommunications laws.
- Telecommunications and broadband providers in negotiating contracts for business and enterprise services, the purchase and sale of telecommunications facilities and systems and the licensing of technology, content and data across service platforms.
- Telecommunications and broadband providers in connection with applicable federal and Iowa regulatory

frameworks, including FCC, IUB and Federal Trade Commission (FTC) consumer privacy and data security regulations.

Recognition

In the Media

- Quoted, “Dentons Reaches Another US Merger Deal, Combining with Iowa Firm,” *The American Lawyer*, December 2020
- Quoted, “Iowa's Davis Brown announces combination with world's largest law firm, Dentons,” *Des Moines Register*, December 2020
- Quoted, “Des Moines’ Davis Brown Law Firm combining with Dentons,” *Business Record*, December 2020
- Quoted, “Dentons announces combination with Davis Brown, Iowa's leading law firm,” *businesswire*, December 2020
- Quoted, “Dentons expanding reach into Iowa,” *The Indiana Lawyer*, December 2020
- Quoted, “Dentons unveils deal to combine with Iowa’s Davis Brown,” *The Global Legal Post*, December 2020
- Quoted, “Dentons announces combination with Davis Brown, Iowa's leading law firm,” *yahoo!finance*, December 2020
- Quoted, “Dentons combines with Iowa firm in 4th expansion deal under new U.S. strategy,” *WestLaw Today*, December 2020
- Quoted, “Dentons announces combination with Davis Brown, Iowa's leading law firm,” *Bloomberg*, December 2020
- Quoted, “Dentons To Combine With Iowa Law Firm In Bid For Expansion,” *Law360*, December 2020
- Quoted, “Dentons announces combination with Davis Brown, Iowa’s leading law firm,” *Global Banking & Finance Review*, December 2020
- Quoted, “Dentons announces combination with Davis Brown, Iowa’s leading law firm,” *Legal Era Online*, December 2020
- Quoted, “Davis Brown Law Firm to Combine with Dentons,” *West Des Moines Chamber News*, December 2020
- Quoted, “Des Moines’ Davis Brown Law Firm Combining with Dentons,” *Medical Alley*, December 2020
- Quoted, “Davis Brown Law Firm to Combine with Dentons,” *FuseDSM December Newsletter*, December 2020

Insights

- Author, “Can I Keep PPP Money? Should I? SBA Clarifies,” *Davis Brown Tax Law Blog*, May 2020
- Author, “Remote Meetings for Iowa Corporations and Cooperatives,” *Davis Brown Legal Issues Blog*, April 2020

Activities and Affiliations

- American Bar Association

- Iowa State Bar Association
- Polk County Bar Association

Community Involvement and Pro Bono

- Board of Directors - Iowa Legal Aid Foundation

Presentations

- Presenter, "Business Acquisition from Start to Finish," National Business Institute, July 2020
- Presenter, "A Triangle of Trust: Counsel, Board and Manager," NTCA Rural Broadband Association Fall Conference and Legal Seminar, September 2018
- Co-Presenter, "White Collar - Preparing for a Government Investigation," Iowa Biotechnology Association Innovation Advancement Workshop, November 2017
- Presenter, "Open Internet: Dead or Alive?," Iowa Communications Alliance, February 2017
- Presenter, "Corporate Governance for Commercial Telcos," NTCA, February 2017
- Presenter, "Contracts 101 and Working with Outside Counsel," Iowa State Bar Association Corporate Counsel Institute, November 2016
- Presenter, "The Ins and Outs of Board Policy," Board Officers Seminar of NTCA, September 2016

Memberships

- Federal Communications Bar Association
- Iowa Communications Alliance
- Iowa Corn Growers Association
- NTCA The Rural Broadband Association

Prior and Present Employment

- Dentons Davis Brown (formerly Davis Brown Law Firm)
- Admissions Counselor, South Dakota State University, 1997-1999

Areas of focus

Practices

- Corporate
- Corporate Governance
- Mergers and Acquisitions
- Public Policy and Regulation
- Compliance and Risk Management
- Privacy and Cybersecurity

- Venture Technology and Emerging Growth Companies
- Media Regulation

Industry sectors

- Communications
- Broadband Access and Internet
- Carriers, Resellers and MVNOs
- Spectrum Licensing and Radio Equipment Approvals
- Energy
- Renewable Energy
- Forest Products and Agribusiness
- Government
- Economic Development

Region

- United States

Education

- University of Iowa College of Law, 2002, JD
- South Dakota State University, 1997, BS

Admissions and qualifications

- Iowa

Languages

- English