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Clinton native opens investment firm in North Carolina

By Traci Gregory

Journal Staff

CLINTON — In a move designed to bring him closer to his own passion for investing, as well as to his two sons attending college in North Carolina, Andrew Burns co-founded Hamilton Point Investment Advisors, LLC, with headquarters in Chapel Hill, N.C. and an office in Clinton.

Burns worked for 15 years for Strategic Investment Advisors, Inc. in Utica, most recently as president and chief investment officer.

"I decided last summer to go out on my own," he says of his decision to start his own firm in partnership with Richard Woods

Rather than start a business here, Burns relocated to Chapel Hill to be closer to his two sons who attend Duke University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, respectively. The beauty of technology, Burns says, is that it allows him to run his business from just about anywhere and capably serve his clients. It just took an initial investment in computers to get the business up and running. Burns declined to reveal start-up costs but did note company shareholders covered the costs. Burns is majority owner of the company.

A number of clients made the move from Strategic with Burns, and he has been working since opening his business in September to gain more clients.

To date, Hamilton Point

(www.Hamilton-point.com) has clients from New York (including the Utica and Syracuse markets), North Carolina, Virginia, Georgia, and California.

"It's all by referral," Burns notes.

In North Carolina, Hamilton Point operates from a 1,200-square-foot leased office at 120 Timberhill Place. Burns serves as president and chief investment officer, and Woods is the company's chief operating officer. Adam Creighton, an investment and operations associate, also works in the Chapel Hill office.

Burns also maintains an office in Clinton at his home there, and will make visits as needed to serve his clients in New York. He plans to spend his summers in Clinton.

As he did at Strategic, Burns continues to work with high-net-worth clients, and Hamilton Point's traditional minimum account size is \$1 million.

Clients benefit from the company's independent status, Burns says. There are no efforts to sell clients insurance or other financial products. Hamilton Point simply serves as a money-management boutique, he says.

In addition, Burns offers clients the reassurance that he invests his own money the same way he recommends they invest theirs. "We eat our own cooking, as we say," he jokes. But the bottom line is that he invests in his own recommendations, something that should reassure clients.

At present, Hamilton

After 15 years at Strategic Investment Advisors, Inc. in Utica, Andrew Burns co-founded Hamilton Point Investment Advisors, LLC, with headquarters in Chapel Hill, N.C., below.



Burns



PHOTO COURTESY OF HAMILTON POINT INVESTMENT ADVISORS

Point has \$50 million in assets under management — a number Burns plans to grow. "My plans are to have a billion dollars under management at some point," he says.

The company is getting ready to start an energy and sustainability audit of the 40 companies it has on its blue chip list. The audit is designed to provide information on "green" activities by those companies as well as their eco-friendliness, Burns says.

"We think it's good business to be on the right side of this," he notes. The results of the audit will give clients the necessary information to invest in a company following green opportunities or a company that follows their own eco-friendly philosophy, he says.

Burns, a Clinton native and 1978 graduate of Hamilton College with a degree in eco-

nomics, remains active in the Clinton community. He serves on the Alumni Council and Town Gown Fund of Hamilton College, is active with the Kirkland Ventures town-planning group, and also serves on the board of ERC International, Inc. of Utica.

Woods has nearly 10 years of experience in the corporate-finance and investment industries. Before co-founding Hamilton Point, he was a senior manager of finance and deal analysis for CNN Worldwide and as an associate with Chatham Capital. He holds a bachelor's degree in public-policy studies from Duke University and a master's degree in business administration from Duke University Fuqua School of Business. □

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