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## Editor's note: Hourly rates in a time of moderation

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[Click to search seven years' of legal billing rates in the 2013 Going Rate database.](#)

We live in a time of moderation, where client pushback has eliminated automatic 6 percent to 8 percent annual rate hikes and now holds lawyers to modest rate increases.

As our cover story by contributing writer Mary Helen Martin makes clear, law firms are turning toward technology to manage billing, increase profitability and improve collection rates and turnarounds.

Drat.

Having worked on the *Daily Report's* annual Going Rate project since 2005—when it was not uncommon for lawyers to bump their rates by \$75 or \$80 in a year—I'd really hoped by now to find a \$1,000 per hour biller in Atlanta. Sigh. Not this year.

The top Atlanta biller we found this year, at \$925 an hour, was L. Wayne Pressgrove Jr., an energy partner at King & Spalding. He also is new to our database.

Right behind him this year is Alston & Bird bankruptcy partner Dennis Connolly, with a 2012 rate of \$875. Last year Connolly tied as Going Rate's top biller with a 2011 hourly rate of \$825. This year, we found 19 Atlantans who charged between \$715 and \$925, compared with nine last year.

The 2011 average rate among the 122 Atlanta partners and senior counsel we found was \$482, up about \$20 from 2011. The average in 2012 was \$484.

The average among the 80 Atlanta associates we found this year was \$310, compared with \$311 in 2011 and \$313 in 2010.

Nationally, we found an average \$671 among 122 partners and senior counsel, compared with \$661 in 2011 and \$639 in 2010. The average nationally among associates and staff attorneys in our database was \$431, down from \$445 last year and \$439 in 2010.

Regarding our research: The rates were culled from Chapter 11 bankruptcy filings in the 64 busiest U.S. bankruptcy courts. Because we pulled from so many courts this year, observant readers may notice a difference in the rates we now display in the print version and those that can be researched in our digital version. To give the *Daily Report's* subscribers a more locally relevant set of rates, we now post rates found for all Georgia legal timekeepers, those originating in Georgia courts and national rates from Am Law 200 firms with offices here.

The hourly rates in our research are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all attorneys. They are a snapshot of what firms in Atlanta and across the country charged in 2012. Because the U.S. bankruptcy code requires that lawyers attest to their usual

and customary hourly billing rates, we view the rates as reliable.

The spelling of names, use of initials, attorney title and home office location were entered in accordance with biographical information available on firm websites, state bar websites or Martindale-Hubbell's list of attorneys.

We account for reduced rates wherever identifiable. We recognize that lawyers often have left the firms where they are listed or have since made partner or retired, but we believe it's important to capture them where they were when the fees were charged.

Because firms adjust their rates at different times throughout the year, the listed hourly rate may have changed. Some of the rates indicated may be blended, although we make every effort to avoid using blended rates. If court papers indicated a range of hourly rates for an attorney, the highest rate available was used.

To see a complete listing of more than 27,500 rates, go to the Going Rate database at [DailyReportOnline.com](http://DailyReportOnline.com), where you can search seven years' of data by name, firm, city, position, years of experience and law school.

A complete and regularly updated national database of more than 87,000 individual rates in all 50 states and 49 countries is available for presale through [ALM's Legal Intelligence](#).



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