

AD AGENCY CLOSES ABRUPTLY



An advertising firm in Fayetteville has told its clients that it is closing its doors. The firm, Smith Advertising & Associates, has been in business for 38 years. The firm has also been accused of involvement in a check fraud scheme and was the subject of a lawsuit. The clients said that the firm did not tell them why they were closing and no one is quite sure if the lawsuit has any bearing on the firm's closing. The firm was sued along with a Florida developer by a bank, which claims that it is owed \$9.8 million. The founder of the agency, Gary Smith, says that the claims are false. The lawyer for the agency, Walt Tippett, was also relieved of his duties. The agency has offices in Sarasota and Fayetteville. The clients for the agency are in those two towns and other areas across the Southeast. Methodist University and the Fayetteville Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, two clients of the agency, have told media outlets that the agency will be closing. The head of the bureau, John Meroski, said that the account executive they work with at the agency called them Wednesday to tell them the agency is closing. Meroski was shocked by the closing and he praised the work of the agency. The contract between the bureau and the agency for 2012 was going to total \$125,000. Meroski also said that the account executive will work with them during the transition to a new agency. Methodist University's marketing and communications director, Maria Brunson, said she was sent an email from the agency regarding the news of its closing. The university uses the agency for extensive advertising and marketing campaigns. Brunson mentioned that she will need to find a replacement agency quickly to keep those campaigns active. "I've never had any problems with them. They (did) really quality work," Pam McEvoy, a spokesperson for the university, said. The agency had not issued any hints that it would be shutting down prior to the announcement this week. News releases were still being issued by the agency as of Tuesday morning regarding its contract renewals and campaigns for clients. There were 25 employees working with the agency at the time of its closing. The lawsuit was filed against the agency and Florida developer Marvin Kaplan by Regions Bank. The two defendants have been accused of check kiting, a scheme that cost the bank millions of dollars.

<https://blog.granted.com/>