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Marking a first in its history, STA Wealth Management has been ranked among the Houston area's largest stockbrokerages and money management firms in the Houston Business Journal's Book of Lists for 2014-15. With seven local stockbrokers, STA Wealth was listed as the 19<sup>th</sup> largest stockbrokerage in the area. In addition, STA Wealth was ranked as the 22<sup>nd</sup> largest money management firm in Houston with \$630 million in asset volume.

"We are excited to be included in these respected rankings," said STA Wealth Management Principal and Chief Investment Officer Luke Patterson. "It is a tribute to our employees' dedication and hard work in serving our clients and helping them achieve their financial and personal goals."

#### **Expanded Expertise and Client Services in 2014**

The rankings in the HBJ lists capped a busy 2014 for STA Wealth. "One of our key objectives for 2014 was to add financial planning and investment analysis expertise for our clients," said STA Wealth Management President and General Partner Michael Smith. "We accomplished this goal by expanding our staff with new team members who bring significant technical and managerial experience in these areas. Among our new client services is executive wealth planning, which gives our high-net worth clients additional tools for preserving their wealth and meeting their long-term personal plans."

In 2014, STA Wealth also launched its new web site which features a podcast of the highly popular STA Money Hour that is produced at the firm's headquarters. The web site's "ask-a-question" section and reprints of financial planning articles are also attracting many visitors.

"By the end of 2014, STA Wealth's asset volume was nearing the \$700 million mark, so we had grown significantly since the HBJ rankings were tallied," Smith pointed out.

#### **Guiding Clients in a Challenging New Year**

Turning to 2015, STA Wealth has geared up to help its clients manage their investments in this climate of increased volatility and continued challenges in the marketplace. "Given the challenges that our area is experiencing with the fall in oil prices, we are well-prepared to assist clients with their IRA rollovers," said Patterson. "With the coming staff reductions in the oil industry, many people will look to move their 401Ks and pensions to IRAs. There are significant, complex rules regarding IRA rollovers. If people are not careful and do not receive expert advice, it can be very costly to their financial future. Some decisions regarding 401Ks and pensions are irrevocable and have large tax consequences if they are not properly handled. On the other hand, these decisions can provide larger benefits if they are well thought out and implemented. At STA Wealth, our team is experienced in managing IRA rollovers and working with clients to protect their hard-earned assets."

In 2015, STA Wealth expects to continue adding talent in both its investment management and financial planning departments to keep up with the demand for its services and the firm's continued client growth.

"While we expect to see significant challenges in the market during 2015, we also know from our deep industry experience that there will be new opportunities for our clients," said Smith. "We will continue to focus on our core values and strengths to deliver meaningful value to our clients. As always, we value our relationships with our clients and look forward to working with them in 2015 and the years ahead."