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Siegfried sets goals for State Chamber

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T. Hastings Siegfried, chairman-elect of The State Chamber and chief operating officer of Nordam, at his office in Tulsa. (Rip Stell)

TULSA – Growing membership and pushing a narrow state legislative agenda are two goals for T. Hastings Siegfried, chairman-elect of The State Chamber of Oklahoma.

Siegfried, Nordam's vice chairman and chief operating officer, takes the reins from current chairman Bill Burgess this summer.

Siegfried will be introduced during a chamber legislative kickoff reception on Tuesday at Southern Hills Country Club.

“Last year we saw a big movement toward business and tax reforms,” Siegfried said. “The challenges going forward will be collaboration, working with all the people who have different ideas about how to work for change that is good for Oklahoma.”

Coming from Tulsa as the incoming chairman is a big advantage to engage the Tulsa business community, Siegfried said.

“Tulsa needs a larger voice in the Capitol and we have such a large manufacturing workforce,” Siegfried said.

Siegfried expects to work in tandem with the Tulsa Metro Chamber.

“With all the relationships we've formed with the Tulsa chamber and regional chambers, we look for even more collaboration between these chambers,” Siegfried said.

Mike Neal, president and CEO of the Tulsa Metro Chamber, echoed Siegfried's comments. Neal added that the Tulsa Metro Chamber and The State Chamber are not in competition.

“We are allies to create a business climate where we attract new companies and enable our existing companies to grow and expand,” Neal said. “The 2011 Agenda for Jobs, a joint effort between The State Chamber, Tulsa Metro Chamber and Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, is an example of how our collaborative partnerships support economic development success.”

Membership in The State Chamber was up 7 percent in 2011 to 2,100, compared to the previous year.

“There is always room to grow,” Siegfried said. “We want to step back and look at the structure as it is today and ask ourselves, ‘is there potentially a better way?’”

A potential focus would be northeast Oklahoma, Siegfried said.

“We’d like to raise our visibility in northeast Oklahoma,” Siegfried said. “We see it as a challenge to grow our influence in this part of the state.”

The State Chamber intends to have a narrow approach toward key legislative items, Siegfried said.

“The key will be more on helping the Capitol know what matters,” Siegfried said.

The State Chamber will still pursue issues regarding taxation, health insurance, economic development, lawsuit reform, energy, workers’ compensation, water, transportation and education. The difference is that there are fewer key issues than in the past.

“We’ll be focused on getting things moving,” Siegfried said.

After graduating from Notre Dame in 1994, Siegfried, who grew up in Tulsa, became a Tulsa police officer. Today he is a reserve deputy for the Tulsa County sheriff’s office.

Siegfried has followed the advice of his father, Ray Siegfried.

“Do what you can for your community,” Siegfried said.

Siegfried and his wife, Dianne, have three daughters: Hayden 13, Sydney 11 and Avery 8.