

Veteran operator guides Embarq's office search

BY JIM DAVIS | STAFF WRITER



Swetnam

When Embarq Corp. needed advice on where to put as many as 1,400 employees who now work on Sprint Nextel Corp.'s campus, the Overland Park-based company dialed up experience.

Greg Swetnam, director of office leasing for Kessinger/Hunter & Co. L.C., has run some of the ar-

ea's highest-profile site searches, including drills that led to H&R Block Inc.'s downtown headquarters and Applebee's International Inc.'s selection of Lenexa for a new headquarters.

"Greg is very helpful in helping guide companies through the process of developing the scope of their real estate needs," said Ned O'Connor, president of Wa-

terford Property Co. LLC, a commercial real estate broker.

O'Connor said Swetnam's first step will be figuring how much space Embarq will need and for how long.

"It's all based on the mission of the company and its business plan," O'Connor said. "Real es-

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tate is merely a tool in operating a business."

Swetnam referred questions about Embarq to the company.

Embarq spun off from Sprint Nextel in May. The company (NYSE: EQ) provides local phone services.

Because the telecommunications industry and Embarq's position in it are changing, O'Connor said, Embarq probably will seek flexibility.

Options include staying on Sprint's Overland Park campus, where Embarq leases about 300,000 square feet. The lease expires in 2008.

Sara Krueger, a Sprint Nextel spokeswoman, wrote in an e-mail to the *Kansas City Business Journal* that speculation about terms of a lease renewal would be "very premature." The decision will be based on "what's best for the company at that time," Krueger wrote.

Embarq spokesman Charles Fleckenstein said the search won't affect the company's headquarters. About 1,000 people work in a company-owned building at 5454 W. 110th St., where Embarq will stay "for the foreseeable future."

Embarq employs about 4,500 people in metropolitan Kansas City, Fleckenstein said.