Acadian Ambulance names new president

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LAFAYETTE — David Pierce, Acadian Ambulance Service's chief operating officer, was named president of the company Friday.

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Richard Zuschlag made the announcement during a telephone interview, saying the board of directors had approved Pierce's promotion. Pierce will assume his position immediately, Zuschlag said.

Pierce, who started with Acadian Ambulance in 1972, becomes the third president of the company. Roland Dugas, one of the company's founders, served as president from 1971 until his retirement in 2000. Zuschlag, also a founder of the company, served as president until Pierce's selection. He will continue to serve as chairman of the board and CEO.

"Our company has doubled in size in the past five years," Zuschlag said.

"The expansion has been so great in magnitude and so multifaceted that it is no longer practical for one person to hold the posts of president, chairman and CEO," Zuschlag said.

Zuschlag called the detail work of running all three positions overwhelming.

"It was the unanimous opinion of the board that David Pierce has earned the office of president," Zuschlag said. Pierce will keep his duties as chief operating officer while holding the president's position.

A 31-year veteran with the company, Pierce joined the firm in 1972 at the age of 18 as an ambulance driver in Abbeville, Zuschlag said.

At that time, a Vermilion Parish ordinance required ambulance drivers to be at least 21 years old, Zuschlag said.

"One of the three owners of our very young company, Richard Sturhose was unsuccessful in arguing for a change in the ordinance," Zuschlag said. "Richard argued that 18-year-old Americans were learning by military combat, and, certainly, they should be considered capable of doing an ambulance job at home."

The ordinance was amended.

Zuschlag said, adding that Pierce moved from ambulance driver in Abbeville to dispatcher in Lafayette. He has also held the positions of supervisor, operations manager and vice president of operations before being named chief operating officer.

Pierce was also the first trustee of Acadian's Employee Stock Option Plan.

Zuschlag said Acadian is starting a rapid expansion program. Among them is the newly created Acadian Integrated Solutions, a safety training school located in Acadiana.

Other programs of the company include serving as the communications arm of the Louisiana Organ Procurement Agency and the Mississippi Organ Recovery Agency. Zuschlag said Acadian fields' telephone calls and helps to coordinate organ donations for these two agencies.

He added that in April, the company is expected to begin providing this service for the Arkansas Regional Organ Recovery Agency.