

The Eyes Have It!

South Dakota Lions Eye Bank

E-NEWSLETTER ISSUE 1

SUMMER 2009

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Contact Us

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South Dakota Lions Eye Bank Hires Interim Executive Director

Sioux Falls, SD – The South Dakota Lions Eye Bank Board of Directors recently announced that after 18 years of dedicated service, the Executive Director, Christine Belitz has resigned from the position. The Lions Eye Bank holds great appreciation for all of Ms. Belitz accomplishments and endeavors in increasing eye, organ, and tissue donation in our state and region. We wish her the very best in all her future endeavors.

The South Dakota Lions Eye Bank holds a strong financial position and will continue to move forward with all current projects and objectives.

Over the next few months the board will be managing an extensive search for a new Executive Director of Lions Eye Bank. In the interim period the Lions Eye Bank has contracted Larry Toll of Sioux Falls to be the interim Executive Director. Mr. Toll brings almost 40 years experience to the Eye Bank from Qwest, US West, and Northwestern Bell. Mr. Toll currently serves on more than half a dozen civic boards throughout the Sioux Empire.

Please e-mail [Larry Toll](mailto:Larry.Toll@sdleb.org) or contact any of the elected Board of Directors of the South Dakota Lions Eye Bank at 1-800-245-7846 for more information.

It's Summer, Let's Golf!



Thank you to our supporters of the South Dakota Lions Eye Bank Gift of Sight Golf Tournaments. These tournaments help us to continue our mission in *Enabling the Restoration of the Gifts of Sight and Health*. The Eye Bank recently celebrated 11 years of golfing for the Sioux Falls tournament and reached a fundraising high of \$13,000 after expenses. The Eye Bank extends a special thanks to our corporate sponsors Ophthalmology Limited and Vance Thompson

Vision. They are a tremendous help in making this tournament a success.

The Rapid City Golf Tournament is scheduled for August 28, at the Elks Golf Course in Rapid City and we want to golf with you. As well as team and hole sponsors, volunteers are always needed. These tournaments helped generate public awareness and education on the needs and benefits of donation. Thank you to our dear friends Lion George Brown and the Rapid City Downtown Lions who host the West river tournament. Their hard work and continued support makes this tournament a success.

Please contact [Brandy Thompson](mailto:Brandy.Thompson@sdleb.org) or George Brown at 605-343-9482 for information or to register for the tournament.

Fun and Fitness for Sight

Last year, the Hill City Lions Club hosted a Walk for Sight to help support your South Dakota Lions Eye Bank. The walk proved to be extremely successful raising \$3,000 and netting a profit of over \$1,000! We learned a few lessons that we will incorporate in this year's event; offering bicyclists the option to participate and requesting the Zone 4 clubs to co-host. This year the Eye Bank and the Hill City Lions would like to invite all Zone 4 clubs to host this event.



South Dakota
Lions Eye Bank

This year's Walk for Sight will be held on September 12, 2009 at the Burlington Northern Hill City Trailhead. It will start at 9:00 a.m. and end at 1:00 p.m. This event proved to not only be enjoyable for participants last year but for the club members and volunteers as well. We are requesting the support of all West River Lions to help make this event successful! Please contact [Brandy Thompson](#) via telephone 1-800-245-7846 to find out how you can be involved!



Ground Breaking



The Lions Eye Bank broke ground on June 10, 2009 and is steadily approaching its Sioux Falls Chamber of Commerce Community Appeals goal of \$800,000, with pledges and gifts totaling \$343,222. Financial pledges and gifts have been received from South Dakotans state wide, neighbors from our region and friends from across the country, helping us get closer to our goal of 3.4 million. The Sioux Falls

Community Appeals phase of the Capital Campaign will continue until August 2009 in conjunction with state-wide business appeals. Please contact [Brandy Thompson](#) at the South Dakota Lions Eye Bank at 1-800-245-7846 or visit our [website](#) for more information or to contribute to the campaign.

Spreading the Word Nationally

Last spring the Eye Bank was contacted by our state's organ procurement organization, LifeSource, to co-host a booth at the 2009 Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. Our booth ran for the entirety of the Rally from the 1st-8th. This proved to be an outstanding way to spread the word and educate the public on the importance of eye, organ, and



tissue donation, not only in our state and region but Nationwide! Once again, this effort could not have been accomplished without the support of our volunteers: Proud Lions, donor families, and transplant recipients. We would like to take this opportunity to thank LifeSource and everyone involved in the development and assistance of the Donate Life booth; you are our shining stars!! For volunteer information please contact [Brandy Thompson](#) via telephone 1-800-245-7846.

Client Manager Report By Ryan Dott

Effective July 1st, 2009, the South Dakota Lions Eye Bank officially launched its cornea cutting program. On Tuesday, July 14th I performed our first in-house cornea preparation for a local surgeon using our new Moria microkeratome. With the DSAEK (Descemet's stripping automated endothelial keratoplasty) procedure becoming the standard of care for cornea transplantation, there is little doubt that we will have a steady amount orders for tissue pre-cut for this procedure.

We have been working diligently on developing a relationship with bone processor LifeTek, Inc. of Gainesville, Florida for tissue processing and distribution. Partnering with LifeTek we will enable Spirit of the North to expand it age criteria to 99 years of age for bone and connective tissue. This has the potential to greatly increase the number of potential eligible donors in our service area. We are also beginning a relationship with Alamo Tissue Services of San Antonio, TX for bone processing. Both relationships are expected to kick-off in the very near future.

While working to establish our Moria and Intralase cornea cutting program as well as develop our relationship with LifeTek, I have been busy searching out and applying for foundation grants which will hopefully help defray the cost of constructing our new

building. Some of the grants that I have applied for include: the Larson Foundation, the Elmen Foundation, the Kresge Foundation, the Gwendolyn L. Stearns Foundation, the Adams-Mastrovich Foundation, and the Dakota Charitable Foundation. To date I have received two requests for full proposals, one refusal, and the rest are still pending decisions by the foundations. The search for more foundation grant opportunities will continue well into the future as well as applying for government grants for green projects such as ours.