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Lions Eye Bank of New Jersey Joins Midwest Eye-Banks; Lions Community Mission to Continue

SPRINGFIELD – The Lions Eye Bank of New Jersey has become a subsidiary of Midwest Eye-Banks, announced Susan d'Olive Mozena, President and Chief Executive Officer of Midwest Eye-Banks and Marshall Klein, Executive Director of the Lions Eye Bank of New Jersey.

"We are pleased to welcome the Lions Eye Bank of New Jersey into our family of eye banks," Mozena said. Midwest Eye-Banks has divisions in Michigan and Illinois, operating as the Michigan Eye-Bank and the Illinois Eye-Bank. "For more than 50 years, our eye banks have distinguished themselves as among the finest in the world," she added. "Our mission has been in concert with the Lions clubs in the communities we serve – to prevent blindness.

"Our community mission simply could not occur without the continuing generosity of our contributors, including Lions and Lioness organizations," Mozena said. Mozena, is a member of the Ann Arbor Host Lions Club in Michigan, which helped establish the original Michigan Eye-Bank in 1957.

The new arrangement will not affect the role that Lions play in the organization, as it will continue to be governed by a Board of Directors comprised of New Jersey Lions, added Stanley Grossman, Treasurer, and eight-year member of the Lions Eye Bank of New Jersey. Grossman has also served as District Governor of the New Jersey Lions District 16E and has served on the Lions International Board of Directors.

"I'm confident that the mission of the Lions in New Jersey, relating to the Eye Bank, will not only continue under the leadership of Midwest Eye-Banks, but will be strengthened," Grossman said. "We're going to be better off."

One of the areas in which he anticipates change is in the ability of the Eye Bank to maximize the potential of procuring and distributing corneas.

Midwest Eye-Banks will make some minor capital improvements to the New Jersey tissue processing laboratory, and is installing all of its information technology and clinical systems in the operation, Mozena said. In addition, Midwest will bring to New Jersey its programs in fund development, public relations and marketing, community education, and outreach to hospital professionals.

Midwest Eye-Banks' divisions distribute nearly 3,000 corneas for transplant annually and is accredited by the Eye Bank Association of America (EBAA). Midwest waives or reduces tissue processing fees when there is the charitable need to do so. Additionally, each year Midwest grants approximately \$100,000 to academic researchers to support early stage research into the causes and cures of blinding eye diseases.

The Lions Eye Bank of New Jersey has been in operation since 1970 and is also accredited by the EBAA. The eye bank recovers, processes and distributes about 400 corneas annually for transplantation.

"We're fortunate to belong to an organization with such high clinical standards," Klein said. "With the clinical skills and information technology of Midwest Eye-Banks, and the support of the New Jersey Lions, we will continue to serve our communities well."

Klein, who is retiring as executive director, will serve as a consultant to Midwest Eye-Banks during the transition, until the end of the calendar year. Bradley Tennant, Vice President of Clinical Operations for Midwest Eye-Banks, has been named interim executive director, while Midwest recruits for the position.

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