30 Years of Eye Care
By Eye Surgeons Associates

Bettendorf, Iowa – September 1, 2014 – Eye Surgeons Associates is celebrating 30 years of providing the Quad Cities with the best vision for a lifetime. Amir Arbisser, M.D. incorporated Eye and Specialty Associates in Muscatine, Iowa in 1981. Lisa Arbisser, M.D. joined the practice in 1984 when they changed the name to Eye Surgeons Associates and moved it to Davenport, Iowa, locating in Mercy Hospital, which is known today as Genesis West.

Since then, Eye Surgeons has grown to 10 board-certified and fellowship-trained physicians, six doctors of optometry, and more than 160 employees working in Silvis, Rock Island, Geneseo, Muscatine and Bettendorf. Eye Surgeons draws most of its 7,500 patients a month from Iowa and Illinois. But, Eye Surgeons is truly a national practice, with about 400 patients a year coming from all other 48 states and Canada. In addition to being on the cutting edge of technology and treatments, Eyes Surgeons maintains a cadre of highly skilled technicians through its own training program. Employees earn the right to enter the training program by demonstrating a commitment to patient care and professionalism. Trainees receive a training program worth about $15,000, are paid while training, and are guaranteed a job as an ophthalmic technician following successful completion of the training.

Dr. John Frederick, president of Eye Surgeons Associates comments, “We’ve been on the forefront of using the latest technologies and new medical and surgical techniques to provide our patients with the best options and care to improve vision. With specialists in glaucoma, retina, cataracts, pediatrics, cornea, oculoplastics and ocular oncology, our large comprehensive group gives Eye Surgeons the benefit of economies of scale to afford the most advanced proven technology available in ophthalmology to help provide the best care to our patients.”

There have been many improvements in the field of ophthalmology over 30 years. The most significant change in eye care occurred when ophthalmology moved from inpatient care to outpatient care. Cataract patients were admitted on a Monday, operated on, on a Tuesday and not discharged until Friday. Now the procedure is done in 10 minutes with a topical anesthetic. The patient used to go home with coke bottle glasses and take 3 months to recover from the surgery. Dr. William Benevento, cataract specialist, comments, “Over my 20 years at ESA, I’ve seen profound changes in cataract surgery. When I started, we frequently used shots and stitches. Folks would be happy to see well with glasses, which we gave a month after surgery. Today, with our smaller incisions, more accurate measurements, and ability to control for astigmatism, we have the ability to get driving vision or better within a week after surgery, frequently without glasses at all.”
Stitches are a rarity, and shots are much less common. We've come a long way and continue to improve, implementing new technology such as laser assisted cataract surgery. It's an exciting time to be an ophthalmologist.”

Dr. Michael Boehm, as a cornea specialist offers, “The one advancement in my 11 years of practice that to me has made the most difference in quality patient care is the evolution of high quality ophthalmic antibiotic and steroid eye drops for treating corneal infectious and inflammatory disease. The improved antibiotic prescription eye drop options have made treating almost any type of corneal infection much more reliable and trustworthy than years past, especially with global antibiotic resistance. In the treatment of dry eye disease, the introduction of Restasis has been a significant "blessing", giving us a powerful and often quite successful treatment option. For general ophthalmology, a very key development has been the coordinated care for diabetic patients between the Primary Care Physician and ESA. Diabetics are diagnosed earlier, under much better blood sugar control, and generally seem to avoid the dreaded complications of diabetic eye disease more often than when I was in training. The incidence of visually significant diabetic eye disease is much better now than 11 years ago.”

For those wanting to reduce or eliminate their need for glasses, their options have never been better from LASIK which was introduced in the late 1990’s to the Quad Cities by Dr. Richard Phinney to refractive lens exchange many more nearsighted, farsighted and astigmatic patients can be helped. Dr. Phinney, a cornea specialist adds, “The introduction of the Intralase laser for flap creation in LASIK has resulted in more reproducibility and safety.”

Dr. Phinney also notes that, “Technical advances in corneal transplantation have dramatically reduced recovery time from up to a year for visual recovery to a matter of a few weeks.”

Dr. Howcroft, retina specialist remarks, “Today, there’s hope for wet macular degeneration patients to improve their vision. With FDA approved intraocular anti-vascular injections, outcomes are enhanced and quality of life is improved. It’s marvelous.”

Eye Surgeons Associates has contributed to the growth of the Quad Cities and believes in giving back to the community. They have sponsored the Challenger softball league, CASI, the American Heart Association, Gilda’s Club, the Chamber of Commerce, the Figge, River Music Experience, Genesis and Trinity, Bettendorf and Silvis Public Libraries and many more over the years.

Dr. Frederick concludes, “There’s nothing more rewarding than hearing that “Wow” after restoring someone’s vision. We want to give a special thank you to the patients who have trusted us with their vision.”
Eye Surgeons Associates is a professional corporation owned by William Benevento, MD, Michael Boehm, MD, Tina Eckhardt, MD, John Frederick, MD, Peter Fries, MD, Michael Howcroft, MD, Raz Penmatcha, MD, Richard Phinney, MD, Nikhil Wagle, MD and James Wymore, MD.