



(800) 477-5652
ola@ola-labs.org
www.ola-labs.org

Optical Laboratories Association

Optical Laboratories Association and The Vision Council Announce Plans to Begin Merge Process

Signed Letter of Intent Announced at The Vision Council's annual Executive Summit

Miami, FL (January 28, 2010) – The Executive Committees of Optical Laboratories Association (OLA) and The Vision Council met this week, during The Vision Council's annual Executive Summit, to conclude discussions ongoing since May 2009 and to confirm their intention to merge the two organizations. "OLA and The Vision Council have always worked closely together due to similar interests," said Kevin Bargman, president of OLA. "After months of discussion, we've determined that joining together helps us both better serve the ophthalmic industry and our members." At the Chairman's Dinner on Thursday night, Mike Daley, chairman of The Vision Council, announced that the Optical Laboratories Association (OLA) and The Vision Council had signed a letter of intent to merge the two organizations. "We're excited about moving these two great industry organizations closer together and will update the industry as the merger agreement is finalized and more details emerge," said Daley.

The announcement follows months of discussions and deliberation. OLA members were surveyed last Fall, and an open forum was held during the OLA's 2009 Annual Meeting to discuss the potential benefits of bringing together the OLA and The Vision Council. The results of both proved positive. An important feature of the agreement is the plan to co-locate the OLA Annual Meeting with International Vision Expo West in Las Vegas. "Sharing the exhibits at Vision Expo will benefit the members of both organizations," said Bargman, "both by reducing members' expenses and by exposure to a broader audience."

Now, the formal due diligence process kicks off as the two organizations exchange financial information, create a formal plan for integration and more. As a more immediate next step, the OLA will work to determine how soon its annual meeting can be co-located with International Vision Expo West. "Everyone agrees in principal that 'the sooner the better' is the answer", said Bob Dziuban, executive director of OLA, "but OLA has existing contracts for the 2010 and 2011 meetings that have to be resolved. OLA and The Vision Council staff are already working together to resolve these contract issues, and we hope to have a conclusion very soon."

"*Tradition + Vision = The Future* is the theme I have chosen for the OLA 2010 Annual Meeting," said Mike Francesconi, OLA vice president and program chairman for this year's meeting, "and you can apply that theme to all of efforts on this project for the last year. We are moving forward as always with developing the highest quality laboratory education for the OLA

"Since 1894 ... bringing the best possible eyewear to consumers."

11096 Lee Highway, Suite A-101 Fairfax, VA 22030-5039 P: (703) 359-2830 F: (703) 359-2834

Annual Meeting.” Programs already planned include: dealing with managed care; how to market your lab; how to have a web presence for your lab; SOPs, production issues, and adopting freeform technology – presented by panels of experienced lab personnel.

“There will be an OLA Annual Meeting in 2010!” said Francesconi, “and it will include the same education and networking opportunities always provided by our annual gathering of labs. The location and dates will be confirmed as soon as negotiations are completed, but we know that we will create the traditional OLA Annual Meeting experience no matter where and when it is held.” The two possible locations and dates are the first week of October in Las Vegas with International Vision Expo West, and the first week of December in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

OLA and The Vision Council will continue to provide information about the progress of all of these events as they unfold.

Optical Laboratories Association (OLA) is the international business association founded in 1894 to serve the needs of the optical laboratory industry. OLA produces education and training for optical laboratories and for eye care professionals, including technical, legal, and regulatory bulletins and manuals, and industry conventions.

Serving as the global voice for vision care products and services, The Vision Council represents the manufacturers and suppliers of the optical industry. We position our members to be successful in a competitive marketplace through education, advocacy, consumer outreach, strategic relationship building and industry forums.