

SOUTHERN COUNCIL OF OPTOMETRISTS

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the 2024 Southern Council of Optometrists House of Delegates session.

Embracing the magic of face-to-face interactions is truly extraordinary. The convergence of brilliant minds in a single space sparks a surge of creative energy and innovation. Rooted in our century-long legacy, we champion education by the profession - for the profession. This year's annual Congress serves as the source for high-level collaboration and networking, propelling our shared mission to provide leading continuing education worldwide and to advance the profession forward.

SECO consistently seeks to attract the most outstanding talents in the field to share their insights at our events, and this year is no different. A few highlights include:

A revamped Surgical & Aesthetics Skills Education Pavilion, in partnership with the American Society of Optometric Surgeons, in the exhibit hall, featuring daily bite-sized educational sessions and demonstrations.

Enriched hands-on workshops and Facilitated Learning Labs.

Expanded symposium sessions, providing attendees with a multitude of meal options throughout the Congress.

An exciting Friday night networking party following the popular Alumni Receptions, in addition to the Saturday Night Party.

A new Student Representative Committee, new Student Travel Grants, and updated networking event.

The return of the complimentary NAO member CE registration and NAO Pavilion in the exhibit hall.

None of these endeavors would be possible without the dedication of volunteers, speakers, and staff, as well as the invaluable financial support from our esteemed industry partners and exhibitors.



Michelle M. Cooper, OD

Michelle Cooper, OD
President
SECO International, LLC

LEADERSHIP

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



Dr. Michelle Cooper
PRESIDENT



Dr. Horace Deal
PRESIDENT ELECT



Dr. Tim Barry
VICE PRESIDENT



Dr. Dave Rouse
TREASURER



Dr. Matt Burchett
SECRETARY



Dr. Christine Cook
IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

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ALABAMA



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ARKANSAS



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DR. MIKE WEEDEN
MISSISSIPPI



DR. MICHAEL HAINES
NORTH CAROLINA



DR. MICHELLE WELCH
OKLAHOMA



DR. LORI ROBERTS HAUSER
SOUTH CAROLINA



DR. PATRICIA WALKER
TENNESSEE



DR. JOE DROTTER
VIRGINIA



DR. BRAD LANE
WEST VIRGINIA

What is SoCo/SECO?

STATE ASSN.	MEMBERS	DELEGATES
Alabama	381	15
Arkansas	363	15
Florida	1392	56
Georgia	685	27
Kentucky	585	23
Louisiana	350	14
Mississippi	260	10
North Carolina	932	37
Oklahoma	532	21
South Carolina	385	15
Tennessee	404	16
Virginia	594	24
West Virginia	183	8

STATE MEMBERSHIP 7,046
 Armed Forces Optometric Society (AFOS)
 Association of Optometrists (UK)
 Colegio de Optometristas de Costa Rica
 Federacion Colombiana de Optometras (FEDOPTO)
 South African Optometric Association
 Trinidad & Tobago Optometrists Association
 World Council of Optometry (WCO)

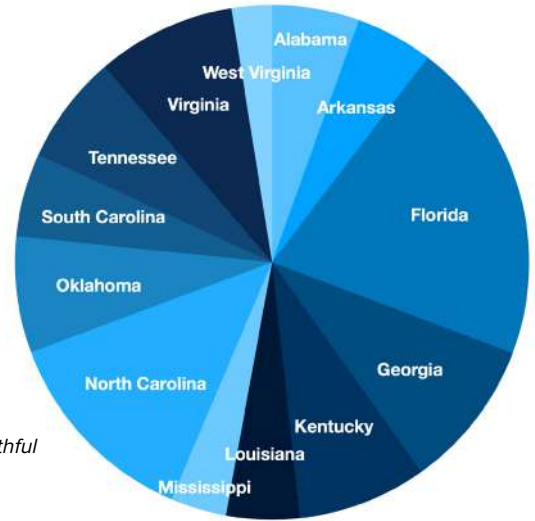
ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP 18,451

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP 25,497



Dr. Matt Burchett
Secretary

I certify that this membership is valid and truthful to the knowledge of the Southern Council of Optometrists, Inc.



SECO International is comprised of 13 state optometric associations and six associated organizations. Any practicing optometrist that is a member of the state association of any of these 13 member-states or associated organizations is considered a member of the Southern Council of Optometrists.

Member States

SECO continues to enhance its presence both nationally and internationally. SECO continuously seeks to produce the best continuing education event in optometry and advance the profession of optometry worldwide.

- Alabama Optometric Association
- Arkansas Optometric Association
- Florida Optometric Association
- Georgia Optometric Association
- Kentucky Optometric Association
- Mississippi Optometric Association
- North Carolina State Optometric Society
- Oklahoma Association of Optometric Physicians
- Optometry Association of Louisiana
- South Carolina Optometric Physicians Association
- Tennessee Association of Optometric Physicians
- Virginia Optometric Association
- West Virginia Association of Optometric Physicians



Associate Members

- Armed Forces Optometric Society (AFOS)
- Association of Optometrists (UK)
- Colegio de Optometristas de Costa Rica
- Federacion Colombiana de Optometras (FEDOPTO)
- South African Optometric Association (SAOA)
- Trinidad & Tobago Optometrists Association (TTOA)
- World Council of Optometry (WCO)



Expanded Partnerships



SECO Education



SECO's hallmark special sessions provide an unmatched platform where attendees have the unique opportunity to learn from industry pioneers, gaining insights and perspectives that are rarely found at other optometry meetings.



We are excited to announce the return of our successful Certificate Programs this year. Feedback from eye care professionals has emphasized how much their patients value the assurance that their provider is actively investing in continuing education and keeping abreast of the newest products, procedures, and services in the field.



CONTACT LENS SUMMIT

The Contact Lens Summit program includes an update on the latest innovations in contact lenses and ways to enhance patient satisfaction.



These sessions are designed to provide attendees with knowledge in understanding the complexities of anterior segment pathologies or implementing effective myopia management strategies.

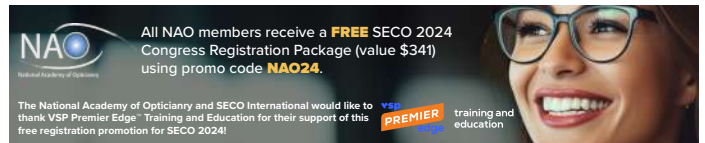
Tim Barry, OD
Vice President
Officer Liaison,
Department of Education

Paul C. Ajamian, OD
General Chair

Paige Foster, OD
OD Committee Chair



MedPRO360 continues to be a cornerstone for advancing leadership and management strategies in the eye care industry. This comprehensive program offers invaluable resources, knowledge, and strategies to navigate the ever-changing business landscape of eye care successfully. With a diverse range of topics, including effective financial management, patient attraction and retention, and enhancing sales and profitability, MedPRO360 equips eye care professionals with the tools to face any business challenge and achieve their greatest potential.



In a shared commitment to delivering top-tier education to eye care professionals worldwide, SECO International and the National Academy of Opticianry (NAO) continue their partnership to curate a selection of exceptional speakers, cutting-edge topics, and captivating presentations for the global eye care community. Russ Tolar, Immediate Past President of NAO, expressed his enthusiasm for the partnership, stating, "Our collaboration with SECO International has already proven to be highly beneficial, offering Opticians of all levels, both members and non-members, access to top-notch education and training. NAO is dedicated to expanding and enhancing our educational offerings, and we believe SECO is the perfect partner to help us achieve this goal. We eagerly anticipate collaborating to bring thought leaders and high-quality content to this focused Opticians track debuting at SECO 2024."

Technology Supports Education



SECO University, the profession's best online education, provides optometrists and ophthalmic professionals outstanding educational opportunities in an online environment to meet the needs and requirements of the profession. SECO continued running Optician education in partnership with the NAO via the SECO University platform in 2023.



In partnership with the National Academy of Opticianry, four six-hour programs were hosted via SECO University in 2023.



SECO Tech Talks were launched via SECO University in 2023. Several Tuesday evening sessions were held, hosted by Dr. Walt Mayo and Dr. Adam Parker. These events were designed for OD's who value open conversations and an opportunity to learn from each other's experiences, challenges, and successes. Far from being a one-way flow of information, attendees were encouraged to participate, voicing their experiences as well as posing questions for the group to help everyone learn about this exciting, quickly expanding area of technology.

Dave Rouse, OD
Secretary
Officer Liaison, Department of
Communication

Derrick Thornton, OD
Chair

SECO Exhibits

Optometry's Marketplace is an essential component of the Congress and, along with the latest products and technology from the optometric industry, offers free education, events, and more.

SECO would like to express our sincere thanks to the exhibitors for their continued support.

EXHIBIT HALL HOURS

Friday, MARCH 1
9:30 AM - 5:00 PM

Saturday, MARCH 2
9:30 AM - 4:00 PM



BUZZ BAR

Grab a hot cup of coffee or a refreshing cocktail while you explore Optometry's Marketplace™ Exhibit Hall.



NAO Pavilion

Discover the NAO Pavilion, a hub for education opportunities and networking designed to enhance the skill sets and knowledge of Opticians at all experience levels.



ONESIGHT

EssilorLuxottica Foundation

Sale for Sight

The OneSight EssilorLuxottica Foundation, created to combat the global challenge of vision care access affecting 2.7 billion people, invites you to support this cause by attending the Sale for Sight.



SURGICAL & AESTHETICS SKILLS EDUCATION PAVILION

Developed in partnership with the American Society of Optometric Surgeons, this dedicated pavilion in Optometry's Marketplace Exhibit Hall features a variety of hands-on experiences designed to familiarize or update attendees with a variety of surgical, laser, and aesthetic procedures.

THE SECO SURGICAL PAVILION IS SPONSORED IN PART BY



THE VIEW LUXURY EYEWEAR

BELLINGER

COLLIER OPTICAL

etnia BARCELONA

Spaid

GARRETT LEIGHT

GAZAL

GIGI STUDIOS

lafont.

MOREL

orgreen

OTTICA VENETA

OVO OPTICS

FOETS

studio

TOM DAVIES

THE OPTICAL FOUNDRY

Silhouette

ZKE



Dr. Tim Barry
Vice President
Officer Liaison, Department of
Business Affairs

Freddie Mayes, OD
Exhibits Chair
Darby Chiasson, OD
Exhibits Vice Chair

Financial

SECO Statement of Financial Position

	2023
Current Assets	\$2,133,205
Property and Equipment / Fixed Net Assets	\$308,325
Other Assets	\$1,457,500
Total Assets	\$3,899,030
Current Liabilities	\$1,208,111
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$2,067,994
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$3,899,030

Reserve Fund Balance:

\$1,457,500

Decrease in Net Assets

\$86,847

Dave Rouse, OD
Treasurer

Christie Cook, OD
Reserve Fund Chair



Award Winners



PRESIDENT'S AWARD

Ron Foreman, OD

Dr. Ronald R. Foreman, OD, stands as a beacon of excellence and dedication within optometry, recently honored with the SECO 2024 President's Award. This prestigious accolade is a testament to his unwavering commitment to advancing eye care, his significant contributions to optometry, and his profound impact on the broader community. Educated at Florida State College and the Illinois College of Optometry, Dr. Foreman's career is a narrative of leadership, marked by his tenure as past president of the Florida Optometric Association, the North Central Optometric Association, and his distinguished service as a Past President of SECO International.

Beyond his professional realm, Dr. Foreman's legacy is enriched by his service in the United States Marine Corps, where he earned the rank of Sergeant and received an honorable discharge, embodying the virtues of discipline and leadership. His civic engagement is equally commendable, with significant roles in the Chamber of Commerce, the March of Dimes, and the Columbia Public Schools Foundation, showcasing his dedication to societal advancement.

His efforts have not gone unrecognized, as evidenced by multiple awards from the Florida Optometric Association, including the Lifetime Achievement Award, Optometrist of the Year, Optometrist of the Decade, and the unparalleled Golden Eagle Award, marking him as a singular figure in the field of optometry. Dr. Foreman's board memberships in various community and financial organizations, like the Columbia Bank and Lake City Medical Center, further illustrate his multifaceted leadership and his commitment to fostering community well-being.

Dr. Foreman's rich professional and civic life, punctuated by high honors and deep community involvement, reflects a career and life lived in the service of others, making the SECO 2024 President's Award a fitting tribute to his enduring legacy in optometry and community service.



DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Joel Byars, OD

Dr. T. Joel Byars, O.D., has been awarded the Distinguished Service Award, celebrating his illustrious career in optometry that began with his graduation from Southern College of Optometry in 1963. His diverse experience ranges from practicing at Georgia State Hospital to serving as a Captain in the U.S. Army Medical Service Corp. Dr. Byars has dedicated over five decades to the field, including owning and operating private practices in Georgia and serving on various boards such as the American Optometric Association and the Georgia State Board of Optometry. Recognized as Georgia Optometrist of the Year in 1978 and O.D. of the South in 1987, his service to the profession and his community is unparalleled. His ongoing volunteer work for over 20 years with the Southern Council of Optometrists (SECO) further exemplifies his commitment to advancing optometry.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR

Mr. Bryan Markowitz

Mr. Bryan Markowitz, nominated for the Executive Director of the Year Award, exemplifies transformative leadership and strategic vision in his role as Executive Director. His tenure is marked by a series of impactful initiatives that have significantly advanced the Georgia Optometric Association (GOA). Under his guidance, the GOA has navigated legislative victories, including the passage of numerous scope bills and measures to empower optometrists against the influence of vision plans.

Bryan's leadership has been pivotal during challenging times, especially through the pandemic. His strategic foresight and fiscal responsibility have not only sustained but also strengthened the GOA, resulting in a more robust and financially sound organization. He has been instrumental in developing a successful industry partnership program, enhancing the GOA's offerings without increasing dues.

His dedication to membership growth is evident through the creation of a young OD committee, a corporate OD committee, and a Leadership Academy, all contributing to the growth and strength of the GOA. Bryan's exceptional leadership style, commitment to excellence, and strategic acumen make him a standout candidate for this prestigious award.



**OPTOMETRIST
OF THE SOUTH**

Selina R. McGee, OD,
FAAO

Selina R. McGee, OD, FAAO, esteemed founder and owner of BeSpoke Vision in Edmond, Oklahoma, has been honored with the Optometrist of the South Award. Her practice, known for its comprehensive optometric care, including a dry eye center, specialty contact lens clinic, and aesthetics suite, sets a high standard in patient care. Dr. McGee’s roles as an adjunct assistant professor at Northeastern State University College of Optometry and a faculty member at the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation exemplify her commitment to educating future optometrists. Her leadership extends to serving as President of the Intrepid Eye Society, a Trustee on the SECO Board, and the Oklahoma Board of Examiners. As a fellow of the American Academy of Optometry, a Diplomate of the American Board of Optometry, and a Past-President of the Oklahoma Association of Optometric Physicians, Dr. McGee has made significant contributions to the field. Her extensive publication record and honors in biology and optometry from Northeastern State University, where she graduated Summa Cum Laude, highlight her academic excellence and dedication to optometry.



**YOUNG
OPTOMETRIST
OF THE SOUTH**

Christian Wyler, OD

Dr. Christian Wyler, recognized with the 2024 Young Optometrist of the South Award by SECO, has significantly impacted his hometown of Lancaster, KY, as its first full-time optometrist since the 1980s, growing his practice to serve nearly 4,000 patients annually since graduating in 2018 from the Pennsylvania College of Optometry. Beyond his clinical contributions, Dr. Wyler has become a community cornerstone, engaging in various local organizations and fostering future optometry interest through mentorship and job shadowing opportunities. His leadership has earned Lancaster Eye Care accolades as the “Best Health Service” and “Best Eye Care Provider” across five counties, reflecting his commitment to patient care and community service. This, alongside his compassionate care for underprivileged children and his previous KOA 2023 Young Optometrist of the Year award, underscores his exceptional dedication and service, making him a deserving candidate for this award.



**OPTICIAN
OF THE SOUTH**

Diane F. Drake, LDO,
ABOM, NCLEM,
FNAO

Diane F. Drake, LDO, ABOM, NCLEM, FNAO, distinguished for her over four decades of commitment to opticianry, is the esteemed recipient of the “Optician of the South” award. She boasts a comprehensive profile with licenses and certifications from the American Board of Opticianry and the National Contact Lens Examiners. Diane’s contributions to the field extend beyond practice to leadership, notably as a past President of the National Academy of Opticianry, where she has significantly impacted opticianry education and community service. Diane has also served on the Allied Healthcare Professionals Continuing Education Committee for SECO International for over 20 years. Her role as an educator and speaker, combined with her authorship in the field, underscores her dedication to enhancing optical standards and mentorship. Recognized with several accolades for her professional excellence and influence, Diane’s illustrious career exemplifies a lifelong dedication to the advancement of optometry, highlighting her as a pivotal figure in both the educational and community spheres of the optical profession.



**PARA-
OPTOMETRIC
OF THE SOUTH**

Savanna Johnson,
CPOA

Savanna Johnson CPOA, awarded the 2024 SECO Paraoptometric of the South, exemplifies commitment to the profession. Her educational path from Smithville High School through Itawamba Community College to achieving CPO and CPOA certifications, and studying for the CPOT exam, underscores her dedication. At Total Eye Care, Johnson has played a pivotal role, from scribing to training new employees, demonstrating excellence in patient care. Her ongoing personal development in billing, coding, and leadership, coupled with active contributions to the optometric community and initiatives like Eight Days of Hope Ministry, showcase her profound impact. Recognized as MOA’s 2023 Paraoptometric and for community service, Johnson’s journey highlights her unwavering dedication to both patient care and community service, meriting her the 2024 SECO award.

Industry Support Fuels SECO

SECO International delivers world-class optometric education thanks to the continued support of our industry partners. The Industry and Professional Relations Committee works year-round with staff to grow our corporate support and sponsorship opportunities with industry to ensure that SECO Supporters maximize their exposure and return on investment.

SECO INTERNATIONAL WOULD LIKE TO THANK OUR SECO 2024 SUPPORTERS



The SECO 2024 Symposium Series was expanded and now includes a Thursday Dinner, and now there are breakfast, lunch, and dinner opportunities throughout the Congress.

TITLE PARTNER
BAUSCH + LOMB

FEATURED SUPPORTERS



CONTRIBUTING SUPPORTERS



PROMOTIONAL SUPPORTERS



Educational Grantors

SECO International extends its appreciation to the following companies for their philanthropic unrestricted educational grant support of the SECO 2024 continuing education program.

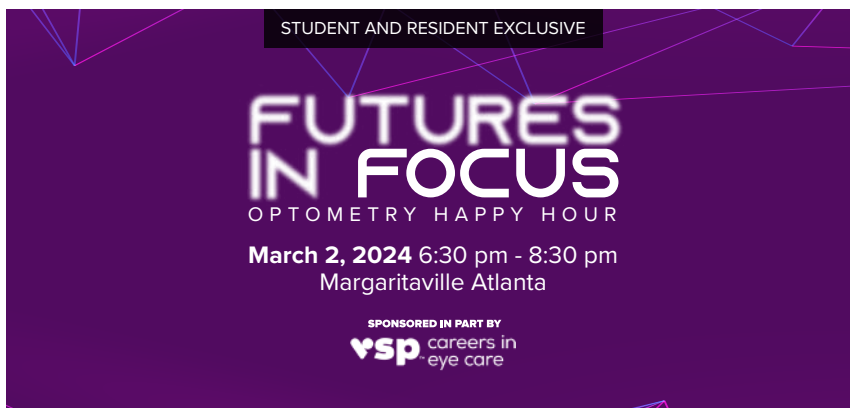
Alcon Abbvie EssilorLuxottica
Healio Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, Inc
Review of Optometry
VSP Premier Edge™ Training and Education

Tim Barry, OD
Vice President
 Officer Liaison, Department of
 Business Affairs

Jonathan Shrewsbury, OD
Chair, IPRC

SECO for Students and Residents

New in 2024, \$250 student travel grants were offered to all five optometry schools (a total of 20 grants) located in SECO member states, sponsored in part by VSP Premier Edge™ Training and Education.



Futures in Focus: Optometry Happy Hour

Instead of the Friday Night Student Party, SECO 2024 features a networking Happy Hour at Margaritaville Restaurant on Saturday evening, bringing together students, residents, and practicing optometrists representing diverse specialties.

SECO Student Representatives

- NOVA** To be Announced
- NSUOCO** Nicholas Rankin
- KYCO** Jenna Gardner
- SCO** Kyle Garner
- UAB** Cheyenne Kazemian

2023 Clinical Excellence Award Winners

- NOVA** Anushka Mistry
- NSUOK** Taylor Vincent
- KYCO** Caitlynn Joy Estevez
- SCO** Sarah Thrower
- UAB** Heidi Hernandez

SECO Exhibitors

SECO2024
THE EDUCATION DESTINATION™
FEBRUARY 28 – MARCH 3, 2024

EXHIBITOR	BOOTH	EXHIBITOR	BOOTH	EXHIBITOR	BOOTH	EXHIBITOR	BOOTH
ACEP Smart Mirror	2031	GBR Medical	1648	MyEyeDr	1542	ScienceBased Health	1646
AbbVie	1738	Gelflex USA	2022	Nanodropper	2131	Scope Health	2226
Alcon	1539	GIGI Studios	THE VIEW	National Academy of Opticianry (NAO)	2156	Silhouette Optical, Ltd.	THE VIEW
American Association of Corporate Optometrists	1816	Glaukos	2246	National Board of Examiners in Optometry	1815	Solutionreach	1925
American Board of Opticianry & National Contact Lens Examiners	1559	Harrow	1949	Neurolens®	2225	Soniquence	1615
American Board of Optometry	2142	Heidelberg Engineering	1649	Next Vision Instruments	2043	Southern College of Optometry	2049
Armed Forces Optometric Society	2227	HEINE	1846	NIDEK Inc.	1619	Stellmacher Instruments, Inc.	1714
Aspex Eyewear Group	2233	Hilco Vision Care Solutions: Bruder Healthcare M&S Technologies	1723	North Carolina Opticians Association	2162	Studio Optyx	THE VIEW
Avësis	1927	HIMAX Dream Eyewear Inc.	2128	Notal Vision	2119	Sun Ophthalmics	2133
Barti Software	1651	HR for Health	2123	Nova Southeastern University College of Optometry	2117	Tarsus Pharmaceuticals	1931
Bausch+Lomb	1531	ICARE USA	1616	Novoxel Ltd	1917	TD Tom Davies	THE VIEW
BlephEx	1749	ImmunoGen, Inc.	2243	OASIS, Medical, Inc.	1814	Tennessee Dispensing Opticians Association	2064
Bolle Brands	1562	InMode	2016	OCULUS, Inc.	1944	The Dry Eye Doctor, Inc.	1617
Chongqing Sunkingdom Medical Instrument Co., Ltd	2145	Innova Systems	1555	OcuRx	2147	The Optical Foundry	V 18
Clivion Inc.	2144	INVISION Magazine	2250	OcuSci, Inc.	2118	The SEES Group	1515
Coburn Technologies	1922	IOVES Spa	2051	OCuSOFT	1926	Thea Pharma Inc.	1523
Collier Optical Lab	THE VIEW	IVERIC Bio	2023	Olleyes	2018	Topcon Healthcare	1747
Compulink Healthcare Solutions / MyEyeStore	1845	ID Medical Devices	1950	Ophthalmogix	2024	Trukera Medical (Formerly TearLab)	1554
CooperVision	2239	Johnson & Johnson Vision	1730	Opticians Association of Georgia	2063	United States Navy Medical Recruiting	2149
Crystal Practice Management	1716	Jonathan Cate	1654	opticwash	2126	Versant Health	1553
DGH Technology Inc.	1719	Kaiser Permanente	1658	OPTIKAM Tech, Inc.	1818	Viatrix, Inc.	1839
Digital Healthcare Professionals	1522	Kasperek Optical	2154	Optometric Aesthetics	1548	Virtual Field	1650
Doctor Multimedia	1718	Kentucky College of Optometry	2231	Optometric Architects	2028	Virtual Vision Health	1715
Dompé	1540	Kering Eyewear USA, Inc.	1851	Optos, Inc.	1823	Vision of Tomorrow, LLC	1656
Eastern Ophthalmic Supply & Repair	1528	Kids Bright Eyes	1550	Orgreen Goldsmith	THE VIEW	Vision Source	2222
eClinicalWorks	1848	Lafont	THE VIEW	Ottica Veneta	THE VIEW	Vision Source	2219
ESE International	1750	LasikPlus / TLC / Lasik Vision Institute	1919	OVVO Optics	THE VIEW	Vision To Learn	2245
eSee Acuity	1923	Lenz Therapeutics	2139	Pharmanex/MD Solution	2046	Visionix	2039
EssilorLuxottica Retail	2129	LKC Technologies	2029	Plusoptix, Inc.	1524	Vizisites	2244
EssilorLuxottica	2035	Lombart Healthcare	1748	POETS Eyewear	THE VIEW	VOSH International	2249
Etnia Eyewear Culture	THE VIEW	Lumenis	1916	Premier Ophthalmic Services	1614	VSP Vision	1939
Executive Biotech Advisors	1659	Zenka	THE VIEW	PECAA	1849	Walman	2138
Eye Designs, LLC	2122	MacuHealth	1914	Rectangle Health	1557	Walmart Health & Wellness	1819
EyeCare Partners	1514	Marco Healthcare	1722	Regener-Eyes	1948	Warby Parker	2116
Eyeefficient, LLC	1655	MaximEyes by First Insight	1549	Reichert / AMETEK	2148	Weave	1519
Faniel Eyewear	THE VIEW	Meivertor	1517	REMOTE AREA MEDICAL - RAM®	2115	Weave	2038
Forus Health	1924	MDelite	1717	Review of Optometry	2005	Wellnext Group	1751
Garrett Leight California Optical	THE VIEW	medpro	2022	RevolutionEHR	1546	Wiley X, Inc.	2042
Gazal Eyewear	THE VIEW	MedTech International Group	1526	RxSight, Inc.	1518	X-Cel Specialty Contacts	2224
		Morel Eyewear	THE VIEW	Santinelli International	1827	Zeiss	2017
		My Business Care Team	1664				

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

SECO

THE EDUCATION DESTINATION™

FEBRUARY 26 – MARCH 2, 2025



SOUTHERN COUNCIL OF OPTOMETRISTS
WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION FOR OPTOMETRY

attendseco.com