



**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Heartland Lions Eye Banks Welcomes New Columbia Branch Manager**

**Columbia, Mo. (September 29, 2009)** – Gary DeLamatre of Ashland, Mo. has been promoted to branch manager and hospital services coordinator at Heartland Lions Eye Banks in Columbia, Mo. Together, DeLamatre and the Eye Bank staff help provide the gift of sight to thousands by retrieving, processing and distributing donated eye tissue for corneal surgeons and their patients.

In his dual role, DeLamatre supervises the facility's technical functions to ensure quality and safety guidelines are followed. He also works closely with 25 medical centers, coroners' offices and funeral homes around central Missouri to help facilitate the donation and transplant process as well as educates those in the community about eye, tissue and organ donation.

DeLamatre joined the Eye Bank in 2008 as a part-time eye bank technician. Since then, he has provided sight to 67 cornea recipients by recovering donated tissue from the Columbia area. For the past 27 years, DeLamatre has been a successful self-employed fine artist, creating and marketing original artworks and limited edition prints at art festivals and galleries throughout the Midwest.

Heartland Lions Eye Banks is a division of the Missouri Lions Eye Research Foundation, a 501c(3) organization with the mission to preserve and restore the sight of people throughout Missouri and around the world. The Eye Bank operates seven branches throughout Missouri, Kansas and Illinois with headquarters in Columbia, Missouri. The Eye Bank is one of the five largest eye banks in the U.S. and offers high quality donor cornea tissue to transplant surgeons. In addition the Eye Bank is committed to research for causes and cures for eye diseases.

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