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PBO TEACHES CORPORATE SAFETY MANAGERS TO "TREASURE THEIR EYESIGHT!"

Prevent Blindness Ohio (PBO) provided eye health and safety presentations at the 2007 Ohio Safety Congress and Expo on March 20th and encouraged participants of the sessions to "treasure their eyesight!" The planning committee incorporated a *Treasure Island/Pirate* theme to provide a fun and interactive way for the participants to learn about eye safety in the workplace. "Good vision is good business!" said Sherill K. Williams, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness Ohio. "Employees with access to comprehensive vision care and who practice eye safety at home, work, or play are employees with better attendance and work quality, higher work productivity, and an increased sense of well-being."

The presentations provided by PBO included:

- Creating an Eye Safety Program for Your Workplace, presented by Bob Schloemer; Titmus Optical
- What to Know About Laser Eye Safety, presented by David Levitan, BS, ME, MBA, CLSO; Domino Amjet, Inc.
- Vision and Ergonomics in the Workplace, presented by Michael DiSanto, ABOM; Independent Optical Industry Trainer
- And Vision *Jeopardy*, provided by the PBO planning committee

More than 300 corporate, school, and government agency health and safety managers participated in four educational sessions. During the first three sessions participants had the opportunity to wear an eye patch for part of the day and provide their experiences during the last session of the day. Those that participated found that they had problems when eating, navigating doorways, and even recognizing neighbors from across the room with the use of only one eye. These brief experiences made powerful statements to the effect that an eye injury can have on an individual.

Prevent Blindness Ohio offers these tips to create an "eye-healthy" and "eye-safe" work environment:

- Provide access to vision care benefits for employees and encourage employees to utilize benefits through educational messages, workplace vision screenings, paycheck stuffers, etc. Regular, preventive eye care is the best defense against vision loss.
- Educate workers about eye safety dangers and enforce use of protective eyewear, as required, on the job.
- Encourage use of proper eye protection at home and play. Sixty percent of eye injuries occur outside the workplace, but these injuries still cause lost time from work.
- Safety eyewear must have "ANSI Z87" clearly marked on all glasses or goggles and should be worn at all times whenever eye hazards are present.
- Computer users can help prevent eyestrain by visiting their eye doctor and making changes to their computer workspace including screen placement, lighting, and chair adjustment.

Research brings the impact of eye safety at work into sharp focus. The U.S. Department of Labor and Statistics published the results of its latest study of injuries and illness in the workplace. In 2004, 1.3 million American workers were injured on the job and required recuperation away from work. Of that number, 36,680 were eye injuries occurring most commonly in men ages 25-44. Lost days from work due to eye problems cost Ohio employers \$13.8 million just last year.

Prevent Blindness Ohio can provide on-site employee vision screening and education and also offers several free fact sheets and brochures including *Eye Safety is No Accident*, *Questions on Eye Safety at Work* and *Workplace Safety Quiz*. Employers can find out more about these services by calling 800-301-2020 or by visiting www.preventblindness.org.

ABOUT PREVENT BLINDNESS OHIO

Prevent Blindness Ohio, founded in 1957, is Ohio's leading volunteer, nonprofit public health organization dedicated to preventing blindness and preserving sight. It serves all 88 Ohio counties, providing direct services to more than 800,000 Ohioans annually and educating millions of consumers about what they can do to protect and preserve their precious gift of sight. Prevent Blindness Ohio is an Ohio of Prevent Blindness America, the country's second-oldest national voluntary health organization. For more information or to make a contribution, visit our website at www.pbohio.org or call 800-301-2020.



Photo Caption: Members of the Prevent Blindness Ohio Safety Congress Planning Committee (from left to right) Kira Baldonado, Kent Pasko, Leslie Colopy, and Lauren Mackowiak at the 2007 All Ohio Safety Congress.