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Expo Highlights Industry's Best With New OPTimum Retail Award

NEW YORK—Vision Expo begins its final day amid reports of a packed exhibit hall and record sales. While yesterday's registration numbers weren't available at press time, show organizers confirmed that more than 10,000 attendees arrived at the Javits in the opening hours of Vision Expo East.

Vision Expo is celebrating the best-of-the-best with awards and events to spotlight the retailers, exhibitors and programs that are driving innovation and excellence in the industry. The Show debuted the new OPTimum Retail Award, a program celebrating independent boutique retailers by showcasing their products, storefronts, visions and most importantly—their stories. The winning retailer, Todd Rogers Eyewear, was selected by a panel of industry judges including James Spina, *20/20 Magazine* Editor in Chief and Senior VP; Christian Roth, Designer and Co-Founder of Christian Roth Eyewear; and Arian Fartash, OD and Instagram social influencer, @glamoptometrist.

For the first time at Vision Expo East, you can vote for the exhibitors who display the most creative booth design as well as the best use of technology. Submit your vote via the Vision Expo mobile app. The winners will be announced today at 4 PM. Attendees also voted for the best new product

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Going Into Vision Expo East 2018 With a Fresh New Look

NEW YORK—A renewed atmosphere greeted attendees at Vision Expo East 2018. This year's show organizers tapped into the creative energy of the Big Apple and rolled out a brand new show featuring new exhibitors, designers, education and events for all to experience.

"We've been finding that there are a lot of fresh new ideas, bold colors and use of different materials, which has been refreshing. Overall, everyone's been friendly and we've been getting a lot of inspiration from everything we've seen here," said Sophia Pray, Eyeballs, Seattle, Washington.

Friday and Saturday of the Show were met with major foot traffic as the Exhibit Hall was filled with energy and buying activity. Over 300 new OPTimum Program members have joined Vision Expo this year, along with over 1,200 new Opticians and Contact Lens Technicians registered for the Show and the



dedicated OptiCon @ Vision Expo programming.

Ginny Mercer, LDO, of Roosevelt Vision in Seattle, Wash., has typically attended OptiCon in the past and was making her first trip to Vision Expo East. "This is my first time to the show, and I've been very pleased

with it," Mercer said. She said she primarily focused on contact lens fitting courses and also was looking at updates that might be available as improvements to in-office equipment.

For the thousands of eyecare professionals registered for education, the Show launched new topics including the Ocular Aesthetics Track, Attract and Retain Customers series and Supporting the Practice Experience sessions

Gary Parchment of ROJW Optical, a nonprofit organization in upstate New York, said this year's Vision Expo East marks his 31st consecutive year of attending a spring optical fair in New York. "Primarily, we're here for the education," he said. "We find that the courses are very practical."

Parchment said the information and learnings he can access at the show helps him throughout

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Industry Support Yields Millions of Eye Exams

Think About Your Eyes' 2018 advertising kicked off in mid-January, with patients seeing messages on TV, websites, and social networks, and hearing messages through their radio. These efforts encourage the public to schedule an annual eye exam, which has led to Think About Your Eyes generating more than 1 million eye exams in 2017 alone.

Results like these reinforce the campaign's importance to the industry, and why the AOA and optometric affiliates across the country continue to support it. Because this campaign is crucial to the growth of the industry, AOA prioritizes encouraging its members to support the 22 industry partners who make the campaign possible.

"Think About Your Eyes is the most important program in optometry's history that delivers our message and paves the way for practice growth and better patient health," said Dr. Christopher Quinn, President, AOA. "We could not accomplish this level of patient education and engagement without the support of our industry partners and, as an organization, we consistently encourage our members to thank them."

The AOA, 41 of its state affiliates and the Armed Forces Optometric Society, who are all leadership partners, recognize the value the program brings to the profession and, more importantly, to patients. In addition to the increased visibility a company receives as a Think About Your Eyes industry partner, the AOA recognizes these supporting organizations throughout the year through direct promotion to their membership at large. From digital and print articles about the program and recognizing industry partners, to social media promotion and advertising support, to recognition at numerous industry events year-round, AOA members consistently see how industry partners are helping to further the profession and eye and vision care.



As the AOA celebrates its fifth year of supporting this initiative that's growing the profession of optometry and the vision industry as a whole, it encourages companies in the industry to follow the examples of the current partners: Alcon, The Vision Council, All About Vision, Gunnar Optiks, Jobson Optical Group, National Vision, Inc. (NVI), SpecialEyes, SPY, Hilco, Walman Optical, Transitions, Shamir, Chemistrie Eyewear, Essilor, Luxottica Group, Eschenbach,

Johnson & Johnson Vision, First Vision Media Group, International Vision Expo, Optolec, Compliance Group, and WestGroupe.

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2018 advertising launched in January and will run through the third quarter of the year. Ads will reach 95 percent of targeted adults

across 40 cable channels, online radio and video, banner ads, local radio stations and syndicated radio shows including Ryan Seacrest and Delilah, and is expected to yield 1.6 billion impressions. ■