

New super laser carries LASIK, first responders to new vision levels



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Biloxi Senior Patrolman Robert McKeithen enjoys 20/20 vision after receiving LASIK laser vision correction from Dr. Rainna Bahadur (right). They appear here after his post-LASIK eye exam at Eye Associates of the South's main clinic in Biloxi.

From New Orleans to Mobile, Eye Associates of the South is the first to offer a newer, blade-free Z-LASIK machine for patients who want LASIK laser vision correction.

To share this advanced technology with the community, Rainna Bahadur, M.D., donated LASIK eye surgery to two active duty members of the Biloxi police and fire departments, who were chosen by their superiors. The ophthalmologist, who is a partner at Eye Associates of the South, has been performing LASIK for a decade.

Since joining Eye Associates of the South in 2003, Bahadur said she has been committed to providing the Mississippi Gulf Coast with the best technology that ophthalmology has to offer. Bahadur thought of offering LASIK to area first responders due to the recent 10th anniversary of 9/11. "They're absolutely our everyday community heroes," she said, "If they can get rid of glasses or contacts, it will be a lot safer for them in their line of work."

Biloxi Senior Patrolman Robert McKeithen, 50, recently received LASIK from Dr. Bahadur and now has 20/20 vision, without wearing contacts or glasses. Since he received monovision LASIK to correct one eye for distance and the other for close-up viewing, he doesn't need reading glasses, either.

Bahadur is screening a Biloxi Fire Department firefighter to receive his LASIK next. Bahadur performs LASIK in a sterile operating room at Cedar Lake Surgery Center. The outpatient procedure takes just a few minutes and vision improvement is immediate.

"I'm amazed by the technology and how easy it went," said patrolman McKeithen. "No pain, at all."

"I'll be a lot safer on the job," he stressed. "I'm thoroughly excited."

He has been wearing glasses since about age 7. "On the job," McKeithen of Biloxi said, "the issue often is my glasses fogging up. As a police officer, that's

extremely dangerous. You never know at any time what comes over the police radio - and you gotta jump! Then I'd have to take my glasses off if they fog up, then with my eyesight poor at distances, I can't see - and that's been of extreme concern to me."

McKeithen said everything from rain and mist from the gulf to the outdoor temperatures created vision problems with his glasses. Contact lenses were even worse for him, he said. He has broken eyeglasses while apprehending suspects and estimated he has replaced at least 40 pairs, mostly due to the job.

Before LASIK, his vision was OD 20/100 and OS 20/400; he had high myopia and high astigmatism, as well as presbyopia.

"I'm ecstatic," he said of his LASIK results. "It's the best thing that's ever happened to me. I've also never won nothing in my life before, not a thing."