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**T. BOONE PICKENS FOUNDATION AWARDS RETINA FOUNDATION**  
**OF THE SOUTHWEST**  
**\$2.5 MILLION GRANT TO FUND MACULAR DEGENERATION RESEARCH**

*Dallas, Texas* – (December 6, 2007) – The Retina Foundation of the Southwest (RFSW) has been awarded a \$2.5 million grant from the T. Boone Pickens Foundation. The grant will be used to fund age-related macular degeneration (AMD) research and establish a chair in Mr. Pickens' name.

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is the leading cause of irreversible vision loss in people over the age of 65. By 2020, the number of people who are legally blind in both eyes is expected to rise 41 percent, presenting a significant national health problem and urgent need for continued research, advocacy and detection.

“The generous and enlightened philanthropy of the T. Boone Pickens Foundation enables The Retina Foundation to extend and expand our ongoing research programs on understanding, preventing and repairing damage from macular degeneration,” said Rand Spencer, M.D., president of RFSW. “We look forward to welcoming one of the world’s leading vision scientists as the T. Boone Pickens Chair in Macular Degeneration at The Foundation.”

The Retina Foundation expects to explore three key areas of AMD repair:

- Cell therapy – the practice of replacing damaged photoreceptors in the macula with cells capable of serving the functions of rods and cones
- Gene therapy – the practice of converting remaining cells, e.g., ganglion cells into cells that respond to light
- Neurotrophic therapy – the practice of using neurotrophic factors to “rescue” damaged photoreceptors in the macula, or
- Corrective therapy – the practice of implanting microelectronic devices used to provide useful vision to those who have advanced macular damage.

“The Retina Foundation of the Southwest has an outstanding reputation as one of the world’s leading vision research organizations,” said Mr. Pickens. “We are pleased to award this grant to further the important work of RFSW in treating and preventing eye disease.”

***About Age-Related Macular Degeneration***

Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) is a degenerative retinal disease which typically strikes adults over age fifty. As it advances, AMD limits a person’s mobility and devastates their sense of independence and security. AMD continues to be the number one cause of irreversible vision loss among seniors in the United States.

***About The Retina Foundation of the Southwest***

The Retina Foundation of the Southwest (RFSW) is an independent, nonprofit institution whose mission is to optimize sight by conducting research to understand, treat and prevent blinding eye diseases.

Founded in 1975 by a group of Dallas area business leaders and ophthalmologists, the RFSW is the only independent, nonprofit eye research institute in the Southwest. The RFSW currently operates six research laboratories, each specializing in a vital area of vision research, and the Southwest Eye Registry, a registry of patients with inherited retinal disorders and allied diseases.

For more information about RFSW, visit [www.retinafoundation.org](http://www.retinafoundation.org).

***About The T. Boone Pickens Foundation***

The T. Boone Pickens Foundation improves lives through grants supporting education, medical research/development and services, athletics and corporate wellness, at-risk youths, the entrepreneurial process, conservation and wildlife programs and a wide-range of public policy initiatives.

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