



BYRUM
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NEWS RELEASE

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**KRISTIE BYRUM NAMED ONE OF TOP 25 WOMEN EMERGING ENTREPRENEURS IN U.S.
*Greenville Marketing Executive Also Winner of Make Mine a Million Business Program***

GREENVILLE, SC, October 13 , 2008 – Leading South Carolina marketing executive, Kristie Bohm Byrum, President and CEO of The Byrum Innovation Group, Inc. (www.byruminnovation.com), in Greenville, has been selected as one of 25 Sam Walton Emerging Entrepreneurs in the inaugural year of the nationwide competition, co-sponsored by Count Me In for Women's Economic Independence™. Additionally, Byrum, APR, has been selected as a 2008 winner of the Make Mine a Million Business Program, co-sponsored by Count Me In™ and the American Express Co.

Byrum is the only competitor to be a winner of both Count Me In programs. She also is the only South Carolinian to win the Carolinas competition. Count Me In is the leading national not-for-profit provider of resources, business education and community support for women entrepreneurs, seeking to grow micro businesses to million dollar enterprises.

"I am overwhelmed and humbled by these two awards, which will strengthen me as an entrepreneur and The Byrum Innovation Group as a marketing firm," Byrum said. "It will prepare me to be a better leader to serve the business community."

Byrum received both awards Oct. 7 at Count Me In ceremonies in Charlotte. The Sam Walton Emerging Entrepreneur Award winners, chosen by a panel of national business leaders, were selected on the basis of their business profiles, their commitment to community and their personal development. The purpose of the competition was to recognize the innovation and job creation potential of small businesses and heighten women entrepreneurs' role in the nation's economy.

Byrum and her fellow awardees will receive one-year of paid professional business coaching, a scholarship to a Leadership Forum in Fort Lauderdale, free access to Count Me In's educational resources and seminars, and a Sam's Club Business Membership, made through a separate donation from Sam's Club. The national competition, funded by the Wal-Mart Foundation, was inspired by the 25th anniversary of Sam's Club, a division of Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. The winners will also benefit from inclusion in the Count Me In organization's community of like-minded women entrepreneurs who inspire and mentor each other.

Byrum competed against hundreds of women entrepreneurs from throughout North and South Carolina for the Make Mine a Million Business Program™. Byrum will receive a package of mentoring, marketing, and technology tools to help grow her businesses beyond the million-dollar mark. She also will receive coaching from Count Me In, a platinum business cash rebate credit card from American Express OPENSM, and financial consultations. The goal of Count Me In is to lead one million women entrepreneurs in an effort to reach annual revenues of one million dollars by 2010.

Byrum is recognized across the state as a leading corporate and Knowledge Economy advocate, a community leader, and a recognized executive in her profession. She is a Board member of Innovision Technology Awards program, which is dedicated to the advancement of technology in the Upstate. She also was a founding board member for the development of a celebration of the arts in Greenville, which evolved into Artisphere, now rated as one of the nation's top arts festivals.

In 2006, Byrum founded The Byrum Innovation Group (BIG), a strategic marketing and communications firm that delivers Silicon Valley success to innovative, global companies operating in the Southeast. BIG positions small- to medium-sized innovation companies for success in commercial marketplaces and in the investment markets. In 2006, Byrum and her firm nurtured an unknown seed-capital nonprofit called SC Launch from obscurity into one of the most recognized brands in the state's Knowledge Economy. Her marketing company remains a resource partner of SC Launch.

Recognized as one of the "Best and Brightest" and "Most Influential People" in Greenville, Byrum has received awards and recognition from entities as diverse and significant as the Public Relations Society of America, Women in Communications, and the Greenville Chamber of Commerce. She is also the author of two books about Greenville – "Greenville Welcome" and "Greenville: A Vested Interest." She has also been a member of the YWCA, the Women's Empowerment Center, Advantage Greenville, the Greenville Rotary Club of Downtown, 96 Women, and the Greenville Professional Women's Forum.

A former reporter for The Greenville News, Byrum was the founder of two marketing and communications companies in Greenville, including Mainline Marketing Communications, Inc., an award-winning firm that later was sold to a regional communications agency.

She received her B.A. degree in journalism from The Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA, and her M.A. in journalism and mass communications from The University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC. She is accredited by The Public Relations Society of America.

A Simpsonville, SC, resident, Byrum is a business partner with her husband, Reed Bolton Byrum, former president and CEO of the Public Relations Society of America, and is the mother of two children.

About Count Me In

Count Me In for Women's Economic Independence (countmein.org) is the leading national not-for-profit provider of resources, business education and community support for women entrepreneurs seeking to grow micro businesses to million dollar enterprises. Count Me In launched the Make Mine a Million \$ Business to inspire one million women entrepreneurs scale their businesses to a million dollars in revenue by 2010 by providing tools, skills and the support of a nation-wide community of peers.

About Make Mine A Million \$ Business

Make Mine a Million \$ Business™, a program of Count Me In and founding partner, American Express OPENSM, provides women entrepreneurs with the opportunity to expand their businesses by generating more than a million dollars in annual revenue. This unique nationwide program provides money, mentoring and marketing opportunities to help businesses grow from micro to millions.

About Byrum Innovation Group (BIG)

Byrum Innovation Group, Inc. (www.byruminnovation.com) is a strategic marketing communications firm that delivers Silicon Valley success to innovative global companies operating in the Southeast that seek strategic positioning in commercial marketplaces and investment markets. BIG, with more Silicon Valley and Austin experience than any firm south of New York, offers strategic branding that bolsters value for business.