



NEWS RELEASE

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Local Business Woman Named As Finalist for the Make Mine a Million \$ Business™ Charlotte Event

**~20 Finalists compete for financing, mentoring, and
other prizes to help catapult their businesses' revenue to a million dollars~**

Charlotte, NC, September 29, 2008 – Business growth program, Make Mine A Million \$ Business, selected Greenville, SC - businesswoman Kristie Bohm Byrum of the Byrum Innovation Group, Inc., as one of the twenty business women finalists to compete for an awards package at the Charlotte, NC, event on October 7, 2008 at the Blake Hotel. The exciting event will feature female entrepreneurs from North and South Carolina who will compete for business development packages that include money, marketing, mentoring and technology assistance to help their businesses grow into million-dollar enterprises. The event also includes educational and network opportunities in addition to keynote speeches by Secretary of State Elaine Marshall and Count Me In Founder, Nell Merlino.

Described as a cross between "The Apprentice" and "American Idol," the competition provides these twenty finalists the opportunity to present their business in a 3 minute "elevator pitch" to a panel of business experts and a live audience. Ten winners will be chosen by the audience and judges who collaborate on the selection process.

Kristie Bohm Byrum is the CEO of Byrum Innovation Group, Inc., a strategic marketing and communications firm that specializes in positioning companies for value in the marketplace and with investors. The firm offers strategic marketing planning, public relations, investor relations, corporate communications and event management services.

Finalists will receive several of the key components of the Make Mine a Million \$ Business awards package that will help their businesses break the million-dollar barrier, which includes inspiration, community, business coaching and mentoring from a "dream" team of coaches and business experts from Count Me In, and select discounts from national sponsors.



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Launched in 2005 by Count Me In for Women's Economic Independence and founding partner American Express OPEN, the Make Mine a Million \$ Business program was created to help post-start up, women-owned businesses grow to one million dollars in annual revenue. Since its inception, the program has hosted 19 competitions in cities around the country and grown into a nationwide movement. For the Charlotte event, more than 200 applications were submitted in hopes of securing one of the finalist spots.

"We thrilled by the eagerness of women in the region to participate in this event," said Nell Merlino, founder and president of Count Me In. "The number of applicants mirrors the growth of our entrepreneurs' businesses and their desire to take them to the million dollar level."

The Make Mine a Million \$ Business program has garnered support from organizations who are all joining hands in order to make an impact in women's lives and strengthening the US economy. The impressive list of blue-chip national sponsors include American Express OPEN, AIG, Cisco, FedEx, Jet Blue, and Dell. Sponsors provide an array of products and services that serve as invaluable tools for growth.

For more information about how women can grow their businesses please visit www.makemineamillion.org.

About Count Me In

Count Me In for Women's Economic Independence 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.