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## **National 2006 Make Mine a \$Million Business™ Program Awards Twenty Women Entrepreneurs at San Francisco Event**

*Awardees to Receive Mentoring, Money, Marketing and Technology Assistance  
toward Building Million-Dollar Enterprises*

**New York (June 6, 2006)** – Twenty successful women entrepreneurs earned a vigorous boost for their businesses Friday after receiving Make Mine a \$Million Business Awards in San Francisco. The awards – presented by Count Me In for Women’s Economic Independence and OPEN from American Express<sup>SM</sup> at the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO) Women's Business Conference – are part of the only national initiative dedicated to assisting the 97 percent of women entrepreneurs with businesses generating less than \$1 million in annual revenues.

The Make Mine a \$Million Business program aims to foster a community of one million women-owned businesses at \$1 million or more in annual revenue by 2010. The effort could help add up to four million jobs and \$700 billion to the US economy.\*

Program awardees are eligible to receive a line of credit from OPEN from American Express and a business loan from Count Me In; a year of intensive business coaching and mentorship from a “dream team” of successful women entrepreneurs and professional coaches; and powerful marketing and technical support to promote and grow their business into million-dollar enterprises within two years.

“The Make Mine a \$Million Business program meets a critical need for the ‘missing middle’ of the population of women entrepreneurs who are neither starting up their business nor running multi-million dollar firms,” said Susan Sobott, president, OPEN from American Express. “Many of them have plateaued short of the million-dollar mark, and OPEN is helping women entrepreneurs access new resources to drive even greater success.”

The twenty Make Mine a \$Million Business awardees, chosen from more than 500 applicants for the San Francisco event, are:

- Amelia Moran Ceja of Napa, CA is President of Ceja Vineyards, an ultra premium wine producer in the Napa and Sonoma valleys.
- Mary Ardapple Dierker of Peoria, IL is President of Apple’s Bakery, a Bakery of made-from-scratch foods using only fresh and homemade ingredients.
- Allison Evanow of Novato, CA is CEO of Square One Organic Spirits, LLC, a developer and marketer of organic spirits.
- Julie Fogg of Long Beach, CA is CEO of Active Port, an authorized reseller of Nortel converged technology solutions.

- Julia Frink of San Francisco, CA is President of Dogwalks.com, a daily dog walking and pet care service in San Francisco.
- Molly Fuller of San Francisco, CA is President of Hands On Gourmet, LLC, a provider of hands-on cooking events for team building and celebrations.
- Theresa Hinton of Louisville, KY is CEO of Comprehensive Consulting, a consulting service providing medical utilization review, medical bill audit, and medical case management.
- Patricia Kelly of Burbank, CA is CEO of Limerick, Inc., a designer and manufacturer of electric breast pumps for multiple users.
- Susan Knapp of Napa, CA is President of A Perfect Pear, a creator and manufacturer of gourmet specialty foods.
- Gina Lyons of Santa Cruz, CA is President of Lyons Marble and Granite Inc., a provider of custom fabrication and installation services for a variety of natural and manmade materials.
- Kimberly Martinez of Engelwood, FL is CEO of Bonitas International, LLC, a wholesaler of fun and creative ID badge displays.
- Diana Mercer of Playa del Rey, CA is CEO of Peace Talks Mediation Services, Inc., which provides a service teaming attorneys and therapists as co-mediators to help families resolve conflict.
- Robin Moorad of Berkeley, CA is CEO of Imago Associates, which buys and resells used and refurbished commercial furnishings.
- Garnett Newcombe of Carson, CA is President of Human Potential Consultants, LLC, which offers project management support, staffing services, and management development services for government and private industry.
- Vanessa O'Neill of Irvine, CA is President of Cedar Spring, Inc., a provider of state-of-the-art health, hygiene, infection control, and diabetes diagnostics solutions.
- Kerrie Paige of Bellingham, WA is CEO of NovaSim, LLC, a provider of software support models targeted to telecommunications and health care systems.
- Linda Russell of San Rafael, CA is President of Mugshots Photography, a portrait photography studio specializing in school photography with a community focus.
- Rosana Santos of Coral Springs, FL is CEO of Big Chef, a manufacturer of handcrafted, frozen hors d'oeuvres and canapés.
- Jinsoo Terry of Berkeley, CA is CEO of Advanced Global Connections, which provides programs on cross-cultural communications, leadership skills, US marketing techniques and methods to Asian Fortune 500 companies.
- Kris Wittenberg of Eagle, CO is President of SayNoMore!Promotions, a promotional agency primarily focusing on using logos as a brand strengthener.

“This new class of Make Mine a \$Million Business awardees are an inspiration to any woman who has dared to create a thriving business but never imagined she would write her own seven-figure success story,” said Nell Merlino, founder and CEO, Count Me In. “Along with nearly two dozen women from the 2005 Make Mine a \$Million Business program, these twenty awardees represent the promise and potential of women entrepreneurs across America.”

The twenty awardees, competing against nearly 40 finalists, earned their awards after delivering business pitches to an audience of more than 650 women entrepreneurs, judges and guests at Friday’s Make Mine a \$Million Business program event at the NAWBO Women in Business Conference. Dany Levy, founder & editor-in-chief of Daily Candy delivered a keynote address at the Make Mine a \$Million Business program awards event.

The annual NAWBO Women's Business conference attracts nearly 700 women entrepreneurs from across the country and around the world. Notable speakers discuss issues impacting women business owners such as entrepreneurship, financing, marketing, technology, and inventiveness. In addition, this conference gives women entrepreneurs the opportunity to network and discuss the success and challenges of owning a business.

### **Cisco Systems Joins QVC to Enhance Program Offering**

Each award recipient will also be eligible to receive a line of credit from OPEN from American Express and a loan of up to \$45,000 from Count-Me-In to help finance the growth of her business. Additionally, San Jose, California-based Cisco Systems® has joined as a Make Mine a \$Million Business program supporter. Cisco will donate network technology and program packages to five awardees to help grow their businesses and sustain a competitive advantage. The packages include a communications networking system as well as support and services via Cisco authorized partners.

QVC also supports the Make Mine a \$Million Business program and is giving qualified awardees an opportunity to sell their products to a national television audience. Annette Grignard, owner of pet product maker Pet Dreams and a 2005 Make Mine a \$Million awardee, recently sold her pet bed products on the network.

“These women truly represent the heart and soul of entrepreneurial success. They are an inspiration to all women who have the desire to succeed in their own business, but need the appropriate financial support and resources to reach their full potential, said Marilyn Montross, QVC's Director of Vendor Relations. “QVC is proud to be one of those resources.”

"A key focus area for Cisco is helping women entrepreneurs achieve their top business priorities through the use of smart business communications and a personalized IT strategy," said Lauren Ventura, senior director for small and midsize business marketing at Cisco Systems. "Collaborating with Count Me In on the Make Mine a \$Million Business program is part of our ongoing commitment to help women-owned businesses take incremental steps to optimize their business at their pace with high-value networking technology."

In 2005, Count Me In and OPEN introduced the Make Mine a \$Million Business program to help women entrepreneurs grow and build sustainable enterprises, create jobs and develop innovative products and services. In last year's Make Mine a \$Million Business pilot program, 23 women entrepreneurs from across the country received one-on-one mentoring, marketing assistance and money in the form of Count Me In loans to fund their growth. 2005 Awardee Denise Houseberg, owner of MarketExpo.com based in Frisco, Texas, has already turned her business into a million-dollar enterprise with assistance she received from the program.

Count Me In and OPEN will award 20 additional entrepreneurs in 2006 at a second event in New York City in late October. Applications for the New York event are due October 5.

### **About Count-Me-In**

Count Me In for Women's Economic Independence is the leading national not-for-profit provider of on-line business loans and resources for women to grow their micro businesses into \$million enterprises. Find us at [www.countmein.org](http://www.countmein.org) or call 212-245-1245.

## **About OPEN from American Express<sup>SM</sup>**

OPEN<sup>SM</sup> is the American Express team dedicated exclusively to the success of small business owners and their companies. The OPEN Team supports business owners with unparalleled service. With tailored products and services, the team delivers purchasing power, flexibility, control and rewards to help customers run their business. Specifically, business owner customers can leverage an enhanced set of products, tools, services and savings, including charge and credit cards, convenient access to working capital, robust online account management capabilities and savings on business services from an expanded lineup of partners. To obtain more information about OPEN<sup>SM</sup>, visit OPEN.com, or call 1-800-NOW-OPEN to apply for a card or loan. Terms and conditions apply.

American Express Company (www.americanexpress.com) is a leading global payments, network and travel company founded in 1850.

## **About QVC**

QVC, Inc., a \$6.5 billion company, is an e-commerce leader, marketing a wide variety of brand name products in such categories as home furnishings, licensed products, fashion, beauty, electronics and fine jewelry. QVC reaches over 89 million homes in the United States. Other divisions/subsidiaries include QVC.com, Q Records and Video, QVC @, QVC Local, QVC ProductWorks. The QVC Studio Tour is located at the company's world headquarters in West Chester, Pa. QVC is a subsidiary of Liberty Media Corporation.

## **About Cisco Systems**

Cisco Systems (NASDAQ: CSCO) is the worldwide leader in networking for the Internet. Cisco news and information are available at <http://www.cisco.com>. For ongoing news, go to <http://newsroom.cisco.com>.

## **About NAWBO**

Founded in 1975, NAWBO propels women entrepreneurs into economic, social and political spheres of power worldwide. More than thirty years later, NAWBO is still the only organization that solely represents the interest of women entrepreneurs in all industries. The organization's mission is to strengthen the wealth-creating capacity of its members and promote economic development; to create innovative and effective change in the business culture; to build strategic alliances, coalitions and affiliations; and to transform public policy and influence opinion makers. Visit [www.nawbo.org](http://www.nawbo.org) for more information.

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\* Data source: US Census Bureau. Economic Census, Survey of Business Owners: Women-Owned Firms, 2002. Published January 2006. (SB02-00CS-WMN). Prepared by Julie Weeks, President and CEO of Womenable, [www.womenable.com](http://www.womenable.com).