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### **Make Mine a Million \$ Business™ Movement Awards Wisconsin Women In First Ever State-Based Competition**

#### *Wisconsin Serves as Template for National Campaign to Help Entrepreneurs*

MADISON, Wis.--([BUSINESS WIRE](#))--Eight Wisconsin women were awarded mentoring, money, marketing and technology assistance at the Make Mine a Million \$ Business ([www.makemineamillion.org](http://www.makemineamillion.org)) event in Madison to help them grow their businesses into million-dollar enterprises. A national, widely recognized initiative launched in 2005, the Make Mine a Million \$ Business program moved to a state-based strategy for the first time starting with Wisconsin this week.

The winners were selected based on elevator pitches they gave to a panel of judges that included Wisconsin Secretary of the Department of Commerce Mary Burke explaining why their businesses have million-dollar potential. Lieutenant Governor Barbara Lawton also participated, giving a stirring speech to the competitors and attending audience.

Currently, 3% of the 10.4 million women-owned U.S. businesses generate \$1 million in revenues annually. Count Me In for Women's Economic Independence and founding partner OPEN from American Express® launched the Make Mine a \$Million Business program to change this. Over the last two years, the program has grown into a nationwide movement with a goal of inspiring one million women to get to \$1 million in revenue by 2010. Over 17,500 have already joined the community. In Wisconsin alone, there are 158,195 women-owned firms with just 4,174 operating over the million-dollar revenue mark, presenting a huge opportunity for women business owners and the state. When one million women grow their businesses to \$1 million, the economic impact on the country will be substantial. In Wisconsin, there will be an additional 13,000 women-owned businesses at \$1 million in revenues, contributing \$13 billion in additional economic activity and creating almost 90,000 new jobs.\*

“What many people fail to realize is the growing population of successful women-owned businesses is an enormous source of economic development, in terms of job creation, gross domestic product, innovation and a host of other factors that make our country stronger,” said Nell Merlino, founder and president of Count Me In. “To be a part of this movement empowers women to get the help they need to grow and encourages them to help each other build great companies. The women in the Make Mine a Million \$ Business program quickly realize that they are not competing with each other but with old ideas and barriers that they are breaking in record proportions.”

“Wisconsin was the perfect state to kick-off our new format because of its enterprising nature and strong economy, as evidenced by recent income and employment data from the Wisconsin Department of Revenue,” said Michelle Thompson-Dolberry, Director, OPEN from American Express. “The success of this event is proof the state-based approach works.”

Since 2005, the Make Mine a Million \$ Business awards program has selected 79 women from across the country to receive a package of products and services to build million dollar enterprises. Ten women crossed the million dollar threshold in 2006. The program has also succeeded in attracting corporations including AIG, FedEx, Intuit, Cisco, and

QVC who are driving the movement and supporting women's business success.

### Wisconsin Awardees

The following eight women were Wisconsin awardees:

- Tammy Adler, of Madison, is president of QWANTify, Inc., an information technology consulting organization specializing in custom software.
- Charlene Foster, of Rock Springs, is owner of Tiny Tush, a natural baby boutique and retailer of cloth diapers and diapering supplies.
- Gail Ambrosius, of Madison, is owner of Gail Ambrosius Chocolatier-Madison, a specialty handmade chocolate business.
- Gail Giese, of Appleton, is president of Dinners Ready of Wisconsin, Inc., a meal preparation service.
- Linda Remeschatis, of Madison, is president of Wisconsinmade, LLC, an e-commerce specialty food and gift store.
- Theretha King and Debra Auer, of Wauwatosa, are founders of Express Drug Screening, LLC, a company specializing in drug and alcohol testing for corporations.
- Susanne Kufahl, of Montello, is president of Fahlgreen Solutions, LLC, a provider of secure criminal justice and biometric identity solutions to businesses and institutional customers.
- Jolanta Sonkin, of Viola, is co-Founder of GoMacro Inc., a manufacturer, wholesaler and online retailer of macrobiotic cookies and bars.

### 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®

OPEN from American Express is the 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, visit [OPEN.com](http://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](http://www.americanexpress.com)) is a leading global payments, network and travel company founded in 1850.

\* 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).

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