



News Release

PRESS OFFICE

Release Date: October 8, 2009

Release Number: 09-69

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SBA Teams with Count Me In to Promote Women's Entrepreneurship

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Small Business Administration and Count Me In for Women's Economic Independence (CMI) launched a cooperative Strategic Alliance Memorandum to promote opportunities for women entrepreneurs through education, training and counseling. The launch, held in Washington, D.C. at SBA's headquarters, also recognized Women's Small Business Month.

The alliance between SBA and CMI will help to strengthen and expand small business development opportunities, particularly those to women entrepreneurs. The alliance is intended to promote collaboration on the development of resources and information to benefit the needs of the small business community, and of women-owned small businesses. SBA and CMI will develop a joint podcast on business start-up and financing, as well as a Web chat on small business issues affecting women entrepreneurs.

"SBA shares a common mission with Count Me In to help encourage more women to be entrepreneurs and to give them the tools to succeed as business owners," said SBA Administrator Karen G. Mills. "Coordinating efforts with this tremendous organization will help to ensure that we reach even more women-owned small businesses."

Speakers at the event included Administrator Mills and Nell Merlino, president and CEO of Count Me In. They addressed an audience of small business owners, local business women and SBA employees, and recognized oovoo design, a woman-owned small business that has thrived during the challenging economy.

Pauline Lewis, owner of oovoo design, is a wholesaler of unique handbags and a past recipient of CMI's Make Mine a Million \$ Business Award that encourages women entrepreneurs to increase their revenues and develop their businesses. Lewis received counseling and training for her business from the SBA's Women's Business Center of Northern Virginia. The center is part of a network of more than 100 WBCs that provide education and training to help women start and grow small businesses. Barbara Wrigley, executive director of the Women's Business Center of Northern Virginia, was also highlighted during the event.

For more information on how SBA can help you start or grow your business, visit www.sba.gov.

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