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CFW Launches The 8th Annual Emerging Designer Competition, One of the Nation's Leading Launch Pads for Aspiring Designers.

(August 5, 2014) Charleston, SC - [Baker Motor Company Charleston Fashion Week®](#) (CFW), one of the leading fashion weeks in the U.S., is launching their 8th annual Emerging Designer Competition: East presented by [Benefitfocus](#). [CFW's Emerging Designer Competition](#) started as a local competition for Charleston-based aspiring designers but has grown into a pathway to national success in the fashion industry. Ayoka Lucas, Style Director for CFW, states *"The ED competition serves as a platform for undiscovered talent and connects them with fashion industry insiders who are looking for the next top designer. We have seen EDs go from the CFW runway to being featured on CNN, VOGUE, Marie Claire, ELLE, WWD and other major media outlets. Plus many have had their collections picked up by stores such as Anthropologie, BARNEY's New York and Neiman Marcus."*

CFW's Emerging Designer Competition: East is now accepting applications through October 14th, 2014. Semifinalists will be chosen and notified by late fall. Semifinalists will show their collections on the runway, March 17th- March 21st, to an average of 1,000 attendees per night including industry experts such as fashion icon Fern Mallis. "CFW provides a unique platform for emerging designers from the east coast: I especially love that it fosters new talent and gives aspiring designers an opportunity to present their collections and ideas on a professional runway," stated Fern Mallis- Creator of New York Fashion Week, host of 92Y Fashion Icons series & SiriusXM Fashion Insiders w/Fern Mallis.

The Grand Prize Winner will be selected and announced on the final evening of CFW 2015 and will be awarded a prize package valued at over \$30,000. For more information, rules and regulations, please visit [CFW's Emerging Designer Competition: East](#).

About the CFW's Emerging Designer Competition: East

Charleston Emerging Designer Competition: East began in 2007 and was open to local Charleston residents only. Due to the success and demand it quickly expanded to include applications from the south and now accepts applications from across the East Coast. Former emerging designers and their collections have evolved to be featured in:

- Mercedes-Benz NY Fashion Week
- Mercedes-Benz Miami Fashion Week- Swim
- *Women's Wear Daily*, *VOGUE*, *Teen VOGUE*, *Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Edition*, *ELLE*, *SHAPE*, *Marie Claire*, and *New York* magazines
- ELLE.com, DailyCandy.com, and Stylesight.com
- CNN, *Project Runway*, *E! News*, and *Fashion Star*
- BARNEY'S New York, Anthropologie, Urban Outfitter, Etsy, W Hotel Group, and ShopBop.com

About Benefitfocus:

Benefitfocus, Inc. (NASDAQ: BNFT) is a leading provider of cloud-based benefits software solutions for consumers, employers, insurance carriers and brokers. Benefitfocus has served more than 23 million consumers on its platform that consists of an integrated portfolio of products and services enabling clients to more efficiently shop, enroll, manage and exchange benefits information. With a user-friendly interface and consumer-centric design, the Benefitfocus Platform provides one place for consumers to access all their benefits. Benefitfocus solutions support the administration of all types of benefits including core medical, dental and other voluntary benefits plans as well as wellness programs. For more information, visit www.benefitfocus.com.

About Baker Motor Company Charleston Fashion Week®:

Showcasing fashion designers, retailers, and models, Baker Motor Company Charleston Fashion Week® (CFW) has fast become one of the premier fashion weeks in North America. Named a Top 20 Event for March by the Southeast Tourism Society, this multimedia event presents high-end runway shows, interactive entertainment, chic after-parties, and press events. The 2014 event featured more than 40 runway shows, over 7,000 attendees, *Charleston Weddings'* Spring Bridal Show, Emerging Designer Competition: East presented by Benefitfocus, and the Rock the Runway Model Competition™. Baker Motor Company Charleston Fashion Week® 2015 is scheduled for March 17th-21st. For more information visit charlestonfashionweek.com