

**For Immediate Release:**

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**2016 Baker Motor Company Charleston Fashion Week® Launches Annual Emerging Designer Competition**

*Event celebrates 10<sup>th</sup> year with \$40,000 Prize Package for Emerging Designer winner, including \$10,000 cash*

**(August 24, 2015) Charleston, S.C. - [Baker Motor Company Charleston Fashion Week®](#) (CFW),** one of the leading fashion weeks in the U.S., is launching its 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. The 2016 Grand Prize winner will be awarded a prize package valued at over \$40,000, including \$10,000 cash, an internship during New York Fashion Week Fall 2016, a private lunch with fashion industry icon Fern Mallis, and a private showing at the retail store In Support Of in NYC and more!

Jacqueline Lawrence, production director for CFW, states “Emerging Designers are the future of fashion, and our competition serves as a platform for undiscovered talent and connects them with fashion industry insiders who are looking for the next top designer. Our event is a place designers get discovered, gain national exposure in the media, and hob-knob with some of the biggest tastemakers in fashion. We have seen EDs go from the CFW runway to being featured on CNN, *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 12, 2015. Semifinalists will be chosen and notified by late fall. Semifinalists will show their collections on the CFW runway, March 15 – March 19, 2016, to an average of 1,000 attendees per night, including industry experts such as 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,” says Fern Mallis, creator of New York Fashion Week, and host of 92Y Fashion Icons with Fern Mallis series.

For more information on entry requirements, including the rules and regulations, please visit [CFW’s Emerging Designer Competition: East](#).

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**About the CFW's Emerging Designer Competition: East**

Charleston Fashion Week's® 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, *Southern Living*, *Travel + Leisure*, *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 Outfitters, 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 25 million consumers on its platform that consist 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 benefit plans as well as wellness programs. For more information, visit [www.benefitfocus.com](http://www.benefitfocus.com).

**About Baker Motor Company Charleston Fashion Week®:**

Showcasing fashion designers, retailers, and models, the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual 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 2015 event featured more than 40 runway shows, over 7,000 attendees, Charleston Weddings' Spring Bridal Show, the Emerging Designer Competition: East presented by Benefitfocus, and the Rock the Runway Model Competition™ presented by ALEX AND ANI®. Baker Motor Company Charleston Fashion Week® 2016 is scheduled for March 15<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup>. For more information visit [www.charlestonfashionweek.com](http://www.charlestonfashionweek.com).