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**Contact: Cristy Jamison**

Touchpoint Communications

(914) 447-7619

[cristy@touchptcom.com](mailto:cristy@touchptcom.com)



**Lexus Charleston Fashion Week® Emerging Designer Competition Expansion and New Belk Prize Addition for 2017**

**(October 11, 2016) CHARLESTON, S.C.** – Lexus Charleston Fashion Week® (CFW), one of the nation’s premier fashion events, announces the expansion of the Emerging Designer Competition to all 50 states. This is the first time in eight years the competition has invited design talent from around the country to compete. The deadline for the Emerging Designer Competition submissions has been extended to October 26, 2016.

Hopeful designers from across the country are encouraged to apply for the event set for March 14-18, 2017. Charleston Fashion Week is a proven launch pad for designers; four competitors from the 2016 competition recently showed at New York Fashion Week: Destani Hoffman, Jon Milner, Lisa N. Hoang, and Storm Dorris.

Emerging Designers are judged by a panel of fashion professionals led by Fern Mallis, founder of New York Fashion Week. The top Emerging Designer wins a prize package including \$10,000 in cash, \$10,000 worth of online marketing, a New York Fashion Week internship, and more.

Additionally Belk, the official department store sponsor for CFW 2017, is adding another layer to the competition this year. One Charleston Fashion Week® Emerging Designer semifinalist will be named as a winner in the Belk Southern Designer Showcase. The prize will include:

- The winner’s merchandise will be carried in select Belk stores and [Belk.com](http://Belk.com) Spring 2018
- Winner will travel to the Belk corporate headquarters for presentation day and subsequent meetings with buyer(s). All travel expenses included.
- \$2,500 cash prize

“We are so honored to have Belk return for its fifth year at Charleston Fashion Week, and we are extremely excited about the new tie-in for our Emerging Designer Competition,” said Naomi Russell, executive director of Charleston Fashion Week. “We strive to discover new designer talent and propel their careers. This new tie-in with the Belk Southern Design Showcase furthers that mission,” she added.

Lexus Charleston Fashion Week® 2017 will be held March 14-March 18, 2017 under the tents in Marion Square. CFW is a proven platform for aspiring designers to gain access to careers in fashion design. Interested

applicants must complete an online application and pay a small processing fee. Please visit [charlestonfashionweek.com/designers](http://charlestonfashionweek.com/designers) for full entry details and to view the official rules & regulations.

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### **About Lexus Charleston Fashion Week®**

Showcasing fashion designers, retailers, and models, the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Lexus Charleston Fashion Week® (CFW) is 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 2016 event featured more than 40 runway shows, 8,100 attendees, *Charleston Weddings* magazine's Spring Bridal Show, the Emerging Designer Competition, and the Rock the Runway Model Competition™. Lexus Charleston Fashion Week® 2017 is scheduled for March 14-18, 2017. For more information visit [charlestonfashionweek.com](http://charlestonfashionweek.com) or [@chasfashweek](https://twitter.com/chasfashweek).

### **About Belk Inc.**

Belk, Inc., a private department store company based in Charlotte, N.C., is the home of Modern, Southern. Style. located in 16 Southern states and a growing digital presence. Belk is a portfolio company of Sycamore Partners, a private equity firm based in New York. Belk and [www.belk.com](http://www.belk.com) offer a wide assortment of national brands and private label fashion apparel, shoes and accessories for the entire family, along with top name cosmetics, a wedding registry, and a large selection of quality merchandise for the home.

Belk offers many ways to connect via digital and social media, including Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Google Plus, and provides exclusive offers, fashion updates, sales notifications and coupons via email or mobile phone text messages. Customers can also download the latest Belk mobile apps for the iPad, iPhone, or Android.