



NEWS RELEASE

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IT Solution Provider CEO Wins 2009 National SBA Women in Business Champion Award

Wisconsin: Laurie Benson, CEO and co-founder of Inacom Information Systems, is SBA's 2009 National Women in Business Champion award winner. Inacom Information Systems is a locally owned Wisconsin based solutions provider specializing in technology consulting, education and procurement for business and education clients throughout Wisconsin and across the country. Founded in 1984, Inacom celebrates its 25th year of IT leadership in 2009 with over 170 employees who live and work throughout the state of Wisconsin. Inacom Information Systems holds top tier partnership with leading global technology manufacturers including Cisco Systems, Microsoft and EMC. Inacom is headquartered in Madison, WI, with offices in Appleton, WI and Brookfield, WI.

Laurie has not only proven herself to be a savvy business owner in her own right, but has also worked to help other women reach significant business milestones. Laurie was instrumental in bringing to Wisconsin the first-ever statewide "Make Mine a \$Million" program of Count Me In for Women's Economic Independence. The program is designed to inspire one million women entrepreneurs to reach the \$1,000,000 revenue mark by 2010 and provides money, mentoring, marketing, and technology tools for program winners. Wisconsin was selected for the statewide pilot and, as a result of the May 2006 event, eight Wisconsin women businesses became award recipients. Laurie continues to be involved and recently participated in the February Wisconsin launch of Count Me In's Make Mine a \$Million Business Race, an on line community to support women business owners hosted by the Wisconsin Department of Commerce. "We were delighted to have Laurie Benson present at this year's M3 Race launch event in Madison," said Wisconsin Department of Commerce Secretary Richard J. Leinenkugel. "Laurie is a tremendous asset to our state both in her business life as the CEO of Inacom and her passion for promoting women's business opportunities throughout the state and country."

Prior to June of 2007, Wisconsin did not have a state administered woman-owned business certification. Upon passage of new state legislation that created it, Laurie served on the Department of Commerce's Woman-Owned Business Certification Administrative Rule Advisory Committee that assisted in developing the administrative code criteria for the program.

Laurie devotes a great deal of her time working with organizations that empower women in their work and in their lives. She served as Co-Chair for the 2008 AHA "Go Red for Women" luncheon to promote heart health in women. Laurie currently serves on the National and Wisconsin Girls Collaborative Champions boards, which engage and support young women in choosing careers in the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering and math). She also co-chairs the UW Madison School of Nursing Board of Visitors, serves on the UW-Madison School of Business Weinert Center for Entrepreneurship MBA Advisory Board and acts as a director on the ITAWI board (WI IT association).

Laurie is a firm believer in giving back to the community and serves on numerous other academic and non-profit boards. She uses her talents and natural leadership skills to mentor others and ensure that all businesswomen are given every opportunity to succeed.

Laurie certainly fits the title of Women Business Champion by the numerous unselfish ways she assists women business owners, driven by the achievements of other women-owned businesses and not her own success. Wisconsin's SBA District Director, Eric Ness said, "We are proud and honored to recognize Wisconsin's own Laurie Benson as SBA's 2009 National Women in Business Champion." "Her enthusiasm and commitment to helping women business owners is making a positive impact on Wisconsin's women entrepreneurs."

Laurie will be presented with her Champion Award at the *National Small Business Week* celebration in Washington, D.C., May 17-19, 2009 and will be honored in Wisconsin at SBA/SCORE's Awards Presentation Breakfast at Country Springs Inn and Resort in Waukesha on June 5, 2009. For more information on the Awards Breakfast, please contact Mary Trimmier at (414) 297-1093 or email her at mary.trimmier@sba.gov.

Additional information about SBA's programs and services is available at SBA's Web site: www.sba.gov and Wisconsin's SBA Website: www.sba.gov/wi