

"It's an honor to get your name listed on the ballot with all the other great regional companies," adds Woodworth, of the Hometown Hero honor. "Then, when you find out that you have won in your region, a sense of pride and accomplishment sets in. Knowing that this award is given by counting votes of people that you have a direct working history with, really makes it that much more special."



Southwest
Precise Corporate Staging, Tempe, AZ

"We are very humbled," said PCS owner David Stern of the Hometown nod — a twofold honor, as his company was also included among the lighting company finalists, a Parnelli Hometown Hero first.

It has been a stellar year for PCS. Country USA, Rock USA, Sturgis Buffalo Chip festivals and a huge Glenn Beck event in Dallas Cowboys Stadium are some of the notable big events they've provided sound for this year. This list of artists is even more impressive: Kid Rock, Mötley Crüe, Kelly Clarkson, The Fray, Kiss, Yes and Taylor Swift, to name a few.



"We started out as a lighting company, then moved to audio, then to video," says Stern, who prides himself on how the company is able to "package" systems for ease of use — and PCS has quite an array of audio gear in its warehouse to pick from. The company added more L-Acoustic line arrays to its inventory this year. Also found going in and out of the PCS loading doc are NEXO Geo S Series line arrays, EAW KF Series cabinets and JBL Eons on smaller jobs. Yamaha DM 2000 digital boards are used, as are Midas Venice and Verona consoles.

The company has stepped up its marketing message, with a revamped website, a newsletter and a media person to handle public relations and social media.

Stern grew up in Dumont, NJ, near Hackensack. During his high school days, the New Jersey club circuit was on fire, and he kept busy working for club bands at night handling sound and/or lighting duties. He would work with Meat Loaf before eventually becoming keyboard tech for Bon Jovi in 1984. He was there for that band's first world tour opening for the Scorpions in the U.S. and Kiss in Europe.

Meanwhile, he met Marla, his future wife, at a bar on July 4, 1980. They married shortly after. Twenty years later to the day, the two formed Precise Corporate Staging. "Our philosophy is we partner with our clients," Stern says. "We help them invest in their business. When their business grows, our business grows." They work show-to-show but also year-to-year. "We want to create events and relationships where we both win."



Canada
Sound Art, Calgary, AB

Sound Art is based in Calgary, with offices in Winnipeg and Toronto, and, like many Hometown Heroes, the company began humbly. "I started out while I was in high school by recording demos for bands in their rehearsal halls," says owner Dave Cousins. "I went from there to mixing rock bands in bars. And from there, out onto

the road."

The company started in Winnipeg and was born of frustration — Cousins increasingly wanted better gear than he could rent locally. "So I had to buy it. I started building the rental inventory through Long & McQuade's Music Store finance plan. I never thought it would go as far as it did... it was really just about putting together a big PA. I didn't have stadium-sized [gear] in mind back then!"

In 2001, Cousins opened the Toronto and Calgary offices, making the latter his HQ, and that's when Sound Art formally started a touring division, going out with Bryan Adams, Sarah McLachlan, Dido and Avril Lavigne among others. He knew he had "arrived" in 2010, when he did Sunfest — his first big event — an outdoor rock festival in Gimli, Manitoba that Sound Art continues to support. "The first big band at it was The Tragically Hip and, later on, the festival featured Pearl Jam."

Today, Sound Art has warehouses in Calgary, Winnipeg and Toronto totaling 28,000 feet. "We started out as a Midas and E-V house. We now supply all the major console lines: Avid, Yamaha, DiGiCo, Midas and Soundcraft," says Cousins. "We are still 100 percent E-V for speakers." As for new equipment, it's a never-ending process, "I tried to buy less this year, and we have still ended up spending over a half a million dollars, and the year isn't over." Sound Art has 35 full-timers and 25 part time employees.



"This year has been great, we are increasing our warehouse space to allow us to prep more shows simultaneously. The next two festivals are X-Fest in Calgary and Sonic Boom in Edmonton. Both are large outdoor rock festivals that run on the same weekend."

Cousins says he is honored to get the Parnelli nod. "I am extremely proud of our staff which would be the reason we were considered for this award. We have a great bunch of guys and girls that our clients love to have on their gigs."

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