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American PI of Ernst & Young Wins 11th Annual FORTUNE Battle of the Corporate Bands

Corporate America's Top Music Makers Headed to Rock and Roll Hall of Fame to Vie for the Title of 'Best Corporate Band'

CLEVELAND, Oct. 2, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- In a competition that took executives out of the boardroom and onto the stage, American PI from Ernst & Young were named "Best Corporate Band" at the 11th annual FORTUNE Battle of the Corporate Bands finals competition, presented by the National Association of Music Merchants (<http://www.namm.org/>) (NAMM), FORTUNE magazine and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum (<http://www.rockhall.com/>). The event was sponsored by JBL by Harman and Gibson Guitar. American PI battled against seven other corporate bands from around the world, selected in earlier regional, semi-final events held in Chicago, Dallas and San Francisco.

The judge's panel included an elite group of music industry influencers comprising Mickey Thomas' Starship bassist Jeff Adams; Pro-Mark Drumsticks Director of Sales Worldwide Pat Brown, .38 Special band member Jeff Carlisi; former Billy Joel drummer Liberty DeVitto; and Sheryl Crow guitarist Peter Stroud.

"Making music in the workplace is a great way for companies to build strong teams, as well as provide an imaginative and innovative outlet," said Joe Lamond, president and CEO, NAMM. "NAMM and the music products industry salute the corporate music makers that made it to the finals of the FORTUNE Battle of the Corporate Bands this year and applaud the growing number of corporations that support their employees' desire to play music together."

NAMM has found that recreational music making (RMM) helps reduce employee turnover and builds morale as employees engage in a common, social activity with colleagues. Furthermore, playing music has been scientifically proven to reduce depression in the workplace, saving companies, such as those participating in the competition, from a problem that has cost employers billions of dollars annually.

Proceeds from the competition benefit the Rock Hall's educational activities.

The winning American PI band members are full-time employees in Ernst & Young's Advisory Services Performance Improvement (PI) practice and create unique arrangements of well-known hits. The group worked their day-job analytical and consultant skills to best determine band members based on their talent, instruments, musical preferences and availability. Rehearsal time is a challenge as the 12 members are located across the country, so they use conference calls and flow charts to organize the group, share ideas and select songs. The young rock band was formed in December last year for a debut gig this past February before taking on the finals of the Hall of Fame's 2011 FORTUNE Battle of the Corporate Bands.

The additional seven FORTUNE Battle of the Corporate Bands finalists were selected from more than 25 entries from North America and Latin America, battling in regional competitions across the United States. Second and third place went to The Messengers from Progressive Insurance and The Toys from Mattel, respectively. The Messengers is a five-person, classic rock and R&B band that formed in 2005. The Toys was formed over a decade ago by Mattel employees and hobbyist musicians, and plays classic rock and smooth sounds from the 70's, 80's & 90's.

Winners in the "Best of" categories were as follows:

- Best Bass Player – FRANCISCO SAPEN, Procter & Gamble Latin America
- Best Drummer – KEVIN GRASSI, Ernst & Young
- Best Guitarist – HANK WOO, Ernst & Young
- Best Horn Player – CONAGRA FOODS HORN SECTION
- Best Keyboardist – TIM FETTIN, Conagra Foods
- Steve Eck Memorial Best Vocalist Award – CYNRESSA DICKEY, Ernst & Young

About NAMM

NAMM is the not-for-profit association that unifies, leads and strengthens the \$17 billion international musical instruments and products industry. NAMM's activities and programs are designed to promote music making to people of all ages. NAMM is comprised of approximately 9,000 Member companies. For more information about NAMM or the proven benefits of making music, interested parties can visit www.namm.org (<http://www.namm.org/>) or call 800-767-NAMM (6266).

About the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum, Inc. is the nonprofit organization that exists to educate visitors, fans and scholars from around the world about the history and continuing significance of rock and roll music. It carries out this mission through its operation of a world-class museum that collects, preserves, exhibits and interprets this art form and through its library and archives as well as its educational programs. For general inquiries, please call 216.781.ROCK(7625) or visit www.rockhall.com (<http://www.rockhall.com/>).

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