

HCN's 2014 Hardware Store ALL STARS

By HCN Staff



All-Star performance comes in many flavors, but it always includes a heavy dose of customer service, innovation and growth. Here and on the following pages, HCN recognizes high-performance independent retailers and the results of the HCN 2014 Hardware Store All-Star search — 50 stores in 50 states.

- ★ **Alabama:** Lincoln Hardware & Supply, Lincoln
- ★ **Alaska:** Sentry Hardware, North Pole and Fairbanks
- ★ **Arizona:** Findysz Ace Hardware, Tucson
- ★ **Arkansas:** Hipp Modern Builders Supply, Mountainview
- ★ **California:** Bay Hardware, Seal Beach
- ★ **Colorado:** Steamboat Ace Hardware, Steamboat Springs
- ★ **Connecticut:** Wilton Hardware, Wilton
- ★ **Delaware:** Baker's Hardware, Millsboro
- ★ **Florida:** Shell Lumber & Hardware, Miami
- ★ **Georgia:** Stone's Home Center, Quitman
- ★ **Hawaii:** HPM Building Supply, Multiple locations
- ★ **Idaho:** Pro X Home Center, Bonners Ferry
- ★ **Illinois:** Geneva Ace Hardware, Geneva
- ★ **Indiana:** Stevenson's Ace Hardware, Crawfordsville
- ★ **Iowa:** Steve's Ace Home & Garden, Dubuque
- ★ **Kansas:** Strasser Hardware, Kansas City
- ★ **Kentucky:** Benton Hardware, Benton
- ★ **Louisiana:** Vidrine's Ace Hardware, Ville Platte
- ★ **Maine:** Paris Farmer's Union, Multiple locations
- ★ **Maryland:** Courtland Hardware, Bel Air and Fallston
- ★ **Massachusetts:** O'Connor Hardware and Rental, Billerica
- ★ **Michigan:** Rylee's Ace Hardware, Grand Rapids
- ★ **Minnesota:** Marvin Home Center, Warroad
- ★ **Mississippi:** Huntington Lumber & Supply Co., Hazlehurst
- ★ **Missouri:** King City Lumber Co., King City
- ★ **Montana:** Triple "S" Building Center, Butte
- ★ **Nebraska:** Mead Lumber, Nebraska City
- ★ **Nevada:** Big R, Winnemucca
- ★ **New Hampshire:** Caron Building Center, Berlin
- ★ **New Jersey:** Colmar Home Center, Margate City
- ★ **New Mexico:** BTU Do it Center, Las Vegas
- ★ **New York:** H.G. Page and Sons Home and Hardware, Lagrangeville
- ★ **North Carolina:** True Value of Concord, Concord
- ★ **North Dakota:** Badlands Do it Best Hardware, Watford City
- ★ **Ohio:** Nutter Hardware, Upper Arlington
- ★ **Oklahoma:** Gordon White Lumber, Davis
- ★ **Oregon:** Madrona Hills Ace Hardware, Salem
- ★ **Pennsylvania:** Stanley's Hardware, Philadelphia
- ★ **Rhode Island:** Damon's Hardware Inc., Wakefield
- ★ **South Carolina:** Paradise Home Center, Union
- ★ **South Dakota:** Custer True Value, Custer
- ★ **Tennessee:** Anderson Lumber Company, Alcoa
- ★ **Texas:** Cox Hardware & Lumber, Houston
- ★ **Utah:** Horseshoe Mountain Home Center, Mt. Pleasant
- ★ **Vermont:** The Pick & Shovel, Newport
- ★ **Virginia:** Page Co-Op Farm Bureau Inc., Luray
- ★ **Washington:** Windsor Plywood, Bellingham
- ★ **West Virginia:** General Building Supply, Huntington
- ★ **Wisconsin:** Scholze Ace Home Center, Black River Falls
- ★ **Wyoming:** True Value of Rawlins, Rawlins

Alabama

Lincoln Hardware & Supply Lincoln, Alabama

In 2009, Lincoln Hardware was named PRO Retailer of the Year by Long-Lewis Hardware Company. In 2014, it got the attention of HCN through multiple nominations and a strong showing of support from its business partners. A willingness to innovate and a basic integrity has gone a long way for owners Thomas and Elizabeth Heath.

Alaska

Sentry Hardware North Pole and Fairbanks, Alaska

Hunting supplies, fishing rods and Interior Alaska's largest selection of fasteners bolster the All-Star status of Sentry Hardware, suited to the unique needs of Alaskan customers. The retailer's Woolly Rhino division purveys performance apparel for the Alaskan female DIYer.

Arizona

Findysz Ace Hardware Tucson, Arizona

Owner Joe Findysz has a knack for niches: a 7,000-sq.-ft. hobby shop, a 10,000-sq.-ft. housewares department (with a fully functional kitchen), and a full-service small-engine repair shop. Plus, the store is on pace to sell 5,000 live chicks this year.

Arkansas

Hipp Modern Builders Supply

Mountainview, Arkansas

Fourth-generation retailer Gentry Hipp is the harbinger of a new era for the Hipp business, working the channels of social media to maximize marketing and market share. You can even watch the 2014 HCN Tools of the Trade honoree in action through the store's all-hours webcam.

California

Bay Hardware

Seal Beach, California

Good things come in small packages, and great locations. Bay Hardware, measuring in at under 3,000 sq. ft., brings in \$1.2 million a year — and in a small town by the beach at that. When you consider the five-star service, selection and the staff's willingness to

go out of their way for their customers, the performance rates "All Star."

Colorado

Steamboat Ace Hardware Steamboat Springs, Colorado

An honoree of Ace's Coolest Hardware Stores roundup for 2014, Steamboat Ace Hardware looks the part with its log cabin exterior, which features two covered patios and a 20-ft. water wheel in a nod to the regional heritage. It also donates more than \$70,000 each year to various community groups.

Connecticut

Wilton Hardware Wilton, Connecticut

It weathered the storm, and now it thrives. Owner Tom Sato saw to it that his customers were taken care of in the days leading up to Hurricane Sandy — even though it had originally planned its grand opening for a few days later. True Value considers Wilton a "store of future," touting its flexible pickup and delivery options.

Delaware

Baker's Hardware Millsboro, Delaware

A "traditional" hardware store, Baker's recent conversion to Ace brought with it an expanded paint, tool, hardware, and lawn and garden offering. The store's additional outpost by the name of Baker's Power & Turf carries a full-service outdoor power equipment dealership, boasting enviable inventory and selection.

Florida

Shell Lumber & Hardware Miami

It's something of a feat to be one of a small handful of independent hardware stores still standing in Miami, let alone one of the top-rated on Yelp. Hence the All-Star title for Shell Lumber & Hardware, a store known for its old-fashioned charm, modern service and smart selection.

Georgia

Stone's Home Center Quitman, Georgia

Jim Stone's first store went up in 1959. Today, the 10-location chain is running on its third generation,

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A HARDWARE
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*based on 2011/2012 U.S. Sales Data

**Steamboat Ace Hardware,
Steamboat Springs, Colorado**



has paid off big time for Pro X Home Center, which now houses a new double drive-through lumber shed and additional property. The growth will continue next year, as recently purchased property for a planned expansion shows confidence in the future.

with strong links to its Georgia and North Florida communities. Cases in point: the Hunter's Night Out event in the fall, animal shelter and pet adoption efforts and childhood cancer research campaigns.

and service. A recent expansion has extended the dealer's reach to Oahu, Maui and Kauai. That's good news for those communities, as the HPM Foundation has donated more than \$50,000 annually to 11 different non-profit organizations.

Hawaii

**HPM Building Supply
(Multiple locations)**

With five Hawaii locations, Big Island's HPM (Hawaii Planing Mill) brings the All-Star traits of growth

Idaho

**Pro X Home Center
Bonners Ferry, Idaho**

A doubling-down on marketing efforts

Illinois

**Geneva Ace Hardware
Geneva, Illinois**



Having recently reopened under new ownership, Geneva's Ace outpost is turning heads for its quality of service, knowledgeable staff and inviting layout, as well as its willingness to pioneer new products and pilot new co-op programs. A tendency to guide customers from start to finish on their projects places this store in All-Star territory.

Indiana

**Stevenson's Ace Hardware
Crawfordsville, Indiana**



Stevenson's holds its own against some of the biggest big-box names in the industry, and it's also the first Ace to include a Sears Hometown Store inside its four walls. But

The newest name in abrasives



the work of an All Star is never finished — the company added 2,000 sq. ft. of selling space and 4,000 new items in the past year.

Iowa

Steve's Ace Home & Garden Dubuque, Iowa

Among Ace's Coolest Hardware Stores of 2014 is Steve's Ace Home & Garden, which manages to bring together a baby gear store, flower section, gift shop, grilling supplies, wine and cheese outpost, three greenhouses, a nursery area and more — all under one happening roof.

Kansas

Strasser Hardware Kansas City, Kansas

In the same location for the past 90 years, Strasser leads the market in power tools and Stihl equipment. At 40,000 sq. ft., this True Value All Star carries hard-to-find items in a format described as a sort of cross between home center and industrial hardware dealer.



Kentucky Benton Hardware Benton, Kentucky

Recognized by Marshall County readers as the area's "No. 1" hardware store, Benton Hardware has the traditional strengths — paint, electrical, plumbing — combined with modern, local marketing. Check out its Ice Bucket Challenge entry on its robust Facebook page.

Louisiana Vidrine's Ace Hardware Ville Platte, Louisiana



Recent winner of Ville Platte's outstanding business award,

Vidrine's is a community stalwart. When he's not coaching the high school baseball team (sometimes to state championship

level), owner Cody Vidrine does things like nab the runner-up title for outstanding Business Person of the Year.

Maine

Paris Farmer's Union (Multiple locations)

Serving the farm and ranch needs of Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont is



From left: Andy Eckman, store manager, and Tom Sato, owner, of Wilton Hardware, Wilton, Connecticut

is also the newest name in tapes.



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Paris Farmer's Union, which was incorporated in Maine in the year of 1919. Still going strong in 2014, the retailer consistently competes on price and value, and it knows how to help novices and seasoned pros alike.

works in concert with strong paint and rental departments. The True Value store sends direct mail circulars every two weeks to 50,000 people, and promotes itself on cable TV each morning.

the puck, but to where the puck is going. It keeps its mix fresh with plumbing, sporting goods, tools, cabinets, lawn and garden, housewares and rental equipment in a 50,000-sq.-ft. state-of-the-art facility. The United Hardware member has been serving the 1,800-population community since 1912.

 **Maryland**
Courtland Hardware
Bel Air and Fallston, Maryland

Big years for Courtland Hardware include 1883, the year of its founding; and 2013, the year it remodeled to Destination True Value. So far, sales are up 35% year-to-date. Empowering its employees is a key to this All-Star store's success — leading to better decisions on the sales floor, and longer-tenured staff.

 **Michigan**
Rylee's Ace Hardware
Grand Rapids, Michigan

As a cream-of-the-crop Ace "Coolest Hardware Store," Rylee's serves its community in a number of ways, including buying and selling used ice skates and hosting free weekly cooking demonstrations in its kitchen. This All Star has a serious side, too: over-investing in emergency supplies to make sure its community is prepared for the worst.

 **Mississippi**
Huntington Lumber & Supply Co.
Hazlehurst, Mississippi


Huntington Lumber's new third-generation owners came in at a pivotal time for the business. The store had just consolidated into a single location, and brothers John and David Huntington decided to make room for growth. An additional 12,000 sq. ft. and 24,000 SKUs later, the brothers have an All-Star destination that's also female-friendly.

 **Massachusetts**
O'Connor Hardware and Rental
Billerica, Massachusetts

This 65,000-sq.-ft. store is big in a lot of ways. A sophisticated lawn-and-garden business (it's one of the top Scotts dealers in all of New England)

 **Minnesota**
Marvin Home Center
Warroad, Minnesota

Located in Hockey Town, USA, Marvin Home Center skates not to

 **Missouri**
King City Lumber Co.
King City, Missouri

It wasn't that long ago that King City



Stone's Home Center
Quitman, Georgia

received its second installment of 40-year mainstay King City Lumber, which specializes in post-frame building. The new store proved a success, doubling the sales of the building's previous owner and exceeding first-year expectations by 20%.

store celebrates 25 years in the same location by renovating its exterior to resemble an old-time lumberyard. The family business takes the All-Star route of investing in its people — a tactic that gives it an edge over larger competitors.

employee owners, to be exact. In Nebraska City, a full array of services keeps the hub moving, including glass cutting, paint matching and project consultation. Mead is a Midwest powerhouse, with All-Star expectations.



Montana

Triple "S" Building Center
Butte, Montana

Not all progress follows a straight line — especially when your local hardware



Nebraska

Mead Lumber
Nebraska City, Nebraska

At 37 locations large across seven states, Mead Lumber contains multitudes. It's also owned by multitudes — 400



Nevada

Big R
Winnemucca, Nevada

Farm and ranch specialist Big R is especially in its element in Winnemucca, where it's involved in just about every local charity cause you can name. From the local high school's Drug Free Graduation Party to the Winnemucca Senior Center, Big R makes its presence felt.

New Hampshire

Caron Building Center
Berlin, New Hampshire

As Berlin's self-proclaimed oldest lumber company, Caron Building Center has staked out a name for a number of good reasons: hands-on involvement in every stage of a project, rigorously trained staff and design resources for builders. It all helps CBC provide customers with All-Star service.

New Jersey

Colmar Home Center
Margate City, New Jersey

In Margate City, owner Tom Collins is always looking for ways to differentiate his store and grow the business. Colmar Home Center recently completed a million-dollar expansion that brought more than 14,000 sq. ft. for retail into play, along with a pet department, a mini dollar store, and expanded kitchen and bath showrooms.

New Mexico

BTU Do it Center
Las Vegas, New Mexico

Owner Wayne Sonchar's All-Star performance began with a survey of customers in 2012 to identify the departments in need of improvement. Then he went to work. Today, the BTU Do it Center features a high-end Stihl showroom, a rental department and a Best Rewards loyalty program. It adds up to service for contractors and the DIY market.

New York

H.G. Page and Sons Home and Hardware
Lagrangeville, New York

For Hudson Valley residents, H.G. Page and Sons is quite literally a household name. Serving homeowners and contractors there for the



Jason Fujimoto,
of HPM Building Supply,
Hawaii.

past 85 years, this home center and full-service lumberyard has earned a solid reputation for its reliability, quality of product offerings and speedy delivery.

North Carolina

True Value of Concord Concord, North Carolina

Danny Meendering and his crew are no strangers to recognition. True Value of Concord is receiving its fair share of recognition this year. A sampling of customer reviews online reveals why: a willingness to go the extra mile for its customers, regardless of whether it's for a big-ticket purchase or a two-dollar part.

North Dakota

Badlands Do it Best Hardware

Watford City, North Dakota

Given the oil boom and wave of recent job creation, North Dakota is a pretty exciting place to be at the moment. Stepping up to the plate are owners Jeff and Laura Dodds, who have remerchandised their store to accommodate the growing demand in the region.



Ohio

Nutter Hardware Upper Arlington, Ohio

It didn't take long for Nutter to earn All-Star status, or be recognized as one of Ace's Coolest Hardware Stores. Opened in August 2011, the store is owned by Chuck Nutter, who also runs a successful Handyman Services business in Central Ohio.



Oklahoma

Gordon White Lumber Davis, Oklahoma

Fresh from its recent modernization, Gordon White Lumber is the ideal representation of a father-to-son transformation. The newest location of the six-unit company features a modern layout that brings customers directly to a wall of exclusive products.

Oregon

Madrona Hills Ace Hardware Salem, Oregon

When Salem locals think "hardware," they think "Madrona."



Besides being easy on the eyes, the store has a customer-pleasing inventory, and a lot of care has been put into its paint, gift and garden departments. Visitors are taken aback by the store's massive selection of nuts and bolts.



Pennsylvania

Stanley's Hardware Philadelphia

Three generations of family ownership has added up to more than 150 years of collective experience running the show at Stanley's. Part of that wisdom means knowing how to adapt: Last year, Stanley's relocated to a store three times larger than the original, featuring an extensive rental department and garden shop.



Rhode Island

Damon's Hardware Inc. Wakefield, Rhode Island

Damon's Hardware has figured out how to turn a shopping trip into a pleasurable experience. Customers know better than to scour the aisles themselves, small and manageable as the store is. The staff is always more than happy to help shoppers find what they're looking for in five

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South Carolina
Paradise Home Center
Union, South Carolina

Paradise Home Center is one brick-and-mortar outpost that's figured out its website game. Backed up by an efficient in-store experience, its e-commerce operations keep the business thriving, providing a level of one-click convenience to give the national players a run for their money.



South Dakota
Custer True Value
Custer, South Dakota

A strong presence in its community has granted a fierce competitive edge to Custer True Value. Known as the go-to place for hard-to-find products and detailed, expert assistance, Custer also takes a successful stand against competitors' prices.



Tennessee
Anderson Lumber
Company

Alcoa, Tennessee

The relationship between Anderson Lumber Company and the community of Alcoa is nothing if not symbiotic: In return for four generations of local support, Anderson makes sure to do things like rally behind local and state athletic teams and raise over \$100,000 for cancer research.

Texas

Cox Hardware & Lumber
Houston

Cox Hardware & Lumber's path to All-Star recognition traveled through the realms of e-commerce and industrial customers. The website, according to one supplier, beats the big players at their own game, driving customers to the store. Additionally, owner Virgil Cox operates a complete lumberyard.



Utah
Horseshoe Mountain
Home Center
Mt. Pleasant, Utah

Over 20 years ago, Glen Peel lost his sight in an industrial accident. Remarkably, he continues to operate Horseshoe Mountain Home Center at an All-Star level, with the help of his son and son-in-law. Horseshoe Mountain recently rolled out new inventory and is rolling out a gift registry and rental area.



Vermont
The Pick & Shovel
Newport, Vermont

Here's a hardware store that goes slightly beyond "general store" territory with its surprising array of product offerings. In addition to standard hardware items, The Pick & Shovel also stocks patio furniture, pet supplies, apparel, maple sugaring equipment and inventive artisanal ice cream.



Nutter Hardware
Upper Arlington, Ohio



Anderson Lumber Company
Alcoa, Tennessee



Virginia

Page Co-Op Farm Bureau Inc.

Luray, Virginia

Page Co-Op is riding the wave of farm and ranch retailing and furthering it with a robust farm and ranch circular, espousing the value of Carhartt clothing, animal wellness products, feed and more. Employees live the rural lifestyle along with the customers, attending frequent events and county fair days.



Washington

Windsor Plywood

Bellingham, Washington

The success of Windsor Plywood in Bellingham, Washington, is getting noticed at Windsor Plywood's head office in Langley, British Columbia. Store manager Ken Asp is building relationships with customers and the community. The store front proclaims: "The experts you need to know." Headquarters writes: "Their pride shows."



West Virginia

General Building Supply

Huntington, West Virginia

At General Building Supply, the name of the game is comprehensiveness. Whether it's top-to-bottom service for new construction projects or seeing each customer through their many questions regarding a small purchase, this is the kind of store that would rather send customers to a competitor than have them not find what they need.



Wisconsin

Scholze Ace Home Center

Black River Falls, Wisconsin

Deep in the heart of Menards territory, Scholze Ace Home Center produced a 17% sales gain January through July. Growth initiatives include a Paint Studio reset and service training (Helpful 101), as well as unique merchandise assortments. Owner Dan Scholze has been very active in the Eau Claire Ace Retailer Group.



Wyoming

True Value of Rawlins

Rawlins, Wyoming

The Rawlins store is the largest purchaser of True Value paint out of the Denver regional distribution center, and it was one of the original beta testers of the True Value Rewards card. All-Star community involvement includes Chamber of Commerce membership, Downtown Development Association, Kiwanis Club and fundraising on behalf of an injured policeman.

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