



Good Audio Marches On

Aimable Mounting Essential to Precision Cardioid Bass Pattern

Hadley, MA Polar Focus Audio Rigging recently designed and fabricated custom outdoor speaker mounting hardware for the Fort Gordon Parade Grounds in Augusta, Georgia. Fort Gordon is home to the US Army's Signal Center and School, as well as a host of other command and agencies from across the joint forces of the United States.

A newly built amphitheater is situated at one end of the Parade Grounds, which is an expanse of open land nearly a mile long. Eight Community R6-51 weatherized speakers provide sound reinforcement audible to about the length of a football field.

The Community R6-51 provides long throw sound projection with a coverage pattern that keeps the sound focused down the field. Concerts and other special events are held there, such as the Halloween Octoberfest, featuring live bands and taking place over several days.



Pre-designed pole assemblies for the speakers were installed in front of the stage by the general contractor, who then called in Terry Frye, Director of Engineering at Communications and Entertainment Inc. of Atlanta, Georgia, to install the audio system. The woofers had to be lined up precisely to produce a cardioid bass pattern that controls the low frequency. Terry Frye had worked with Mike Akrep of Polar Focus before, and he called on Akrep to help him devise a rigid mounting design for the installation. A gimble mount design for the R6-51 speakers, which weigh some 318 pounds each, was already on file at Polar Focus, but had to be modified for this application.

Polar Focus saves data gathering time by sending out one or more of a wide variety of worksheets to their customers, who then fill them out and send them back. These worksheets make the job of getting precise attachment beam measurements and speaker geometry more efficient. Terry Frye had some CAD data from Community which he provided to Mike Akrep. Working with that data, plus the pole dimensions and speaker geometry, Frye and Akrep traded ideas until they arrived at a design that would work. Adjustability before final fastening was built into the design.

Terry Frye, speaking about his experience over several jobs he has done with Polar Focus, pointed out that Mike Akrep always takes a genuine interest in the projects of his customers. Mike did some custom documentation to assist in the installation. Polar Focus also provided photographs and instructions that illustrated how to assemble the components. Operations manager Mark Mattson did test assembly in the CEI shop with tech support by phone from Polar Focus. Completing the package of care in custom designs, written assembly instructions, and knowledgeable technical support, was on time delivery, which Terry Frye also said was provided by Polar Focus.

Working onsite with Mark Mattson was Lead Installation Technician Ryan Stokes, who with Carlton Francis did most of the onsite speaker mounting with the CEI installation team. Michael Held was the sales representative for the project. In addition to the Community speakers, CEI also installed an Allen & Heath GL4800M-848A mixing board, several Crown I-T series 6000 and 8000 amplifiers, a Shure SLX wireless microphone system, a Crown XTI 1000, a Biamp audiaflux processor, which provides limiting and surge protection, a Telex BTR300 intercom system, 12" two way EAW monitors, a front of house effects rack, and a portable monitor rack. CEI also trained staff from Fort Gordon to run the new equipment. Sound system operators at the Fort Gordon Amphitheater now have ample audio firepower under their command.

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