

## Massachusetts Towns Top the Nation in Spending on Audio/Visual Equipment on 2011 List

By Julie Rabinowitz

WOOLWICH, Maine—If you are invited to watch the Super Bowl at a friend's home in Weston, Mass., you are likely to have a great experience, and not just because your favorite team might be playing in it. It is because Weston leads the nation in consumer spending on audio/visual equipment, according to new 2011 forecast data released by Pinpoint Demographics. Four Massachusetts towns, all suburbs of Boston, and three Texas towns, all suburbs of Dallas, comprise seven of the top ten neighborhoods by zip code with the highest per capita spending on audio/visual equipment.

Other towns on the list include the affluent neighborhood of Hamel in Minneapolis, Minn.—ranked fourth, Danville, Calif., a suburb of Oakland and San Francisco—ranked fifth, and Novi, Mich., an affluent suburb of Detroit—ranked sixth.

Residents of Weston spent on average \$840 per person on audiovisual equipment and services in 2010. As a whole, the town's residents spent more than \$9.5 million that year for a population of only slightly more than 11,000 people.

The other three Massachusetts towns making the list—Wellesley Hills in second place, Newton Center in third, and Wellesley, in eighth—neighbor Weston.

All of the towns share similar demographics. Residents are mostly white and mostly married, but they all have a median age younger than 43, and most of the top ten communities have a median age in the 30s, according to 2010 U.S. Census Bureau data.

Demographics do play a role in technology spending. "Men plan to spend more and do spend more," noted Steve Koenig, director of industry analysis for the Consumer Electronics Association (CEA). CEA is the industry trade group best known for its annual International Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas—the world's largest consumer technology tradeshow featuring 2,700 exhibitors. CEA tracks spending on consumer electronics and industry trends.

Koenig indicated that consumers are spending more on technology again. "The average household increased their consumer electronics spending in 2010 to between \$1,200 and \$1,300, which is up 10%. This increase is larger because the recession caused consumer spending to fall in 2009." Several trends are driving this increase. "Consumer technology trends that are garnering a lot of attention are the e-readers and tablets. E-readers have been around but the pricing has come down. Tablets are a new category," Koenig noted.

He predicted that consumers will pay more attention to their audio equipment in 2011. "We have seen 72% household penetration of HDTV, and 85% household penetration of digital TV. These figures reflect that most people have already upgraded their flagship display and a bedroom or secondary television. The trend will turn to audio." One of the products Koenig described that consumers particularly like is the sound bar, which has speakers and sits under the flat screen. "Sound bars augment the audio with surround sound, but at a lower price point than traditional

5.1 surround systems. Most are priced under \$500, with many coming in less than \$300.” Koenig said that people often choose the sound bars manufactured by their TV maker because they offer “a custom fit and a nice look.”

The CEA recently created a new membership category specifically for people who are early adopters and fervent supporters of consumer technology. Koenig described some of these new technologies of interest to this group. “The premium sets in the market are the 3D TVs. About 1.1 million were sold in 2010, and we expect to sell about 1.9 million in 2011. The issue with 3D TV is that there was a dearth of 3D content in 2010. Expect more content for gaming, movies, and broadcasting, like ESPN. We are really looking at 2012 and beyond, when more content becomes available—2011 will be a building year.”

Another trend for 2011 is connected TV. Connected TV is a television set that can connect to the Internet and share content from multiple devices. Both Samsung and Sony offer connected TV systems. Koenig described these smart TVs as “upping the ante on the value proposition by offering a TV that is attached to services that can fill it with content.”

Pinpoint Demographics, a division of Barnes Reports, is a leading demographics research firm located in Woolwich, Maine. Pinpoint Demographics provides the most current, accurate and cost-effective data population demographics, consumer spending, retail business and services businesses estimates for each of the 30,000+ U.S. zip codes. Pinpoint’s proprietary economic model uses exponential regression analysis to annually estimate 2011 and five year forecast 2016 populations, broken down by race, age, income, educational attainment and occupation.

Pinpoint Demographics’ databases are available in a number of products. The “America’s Neighborhoods” series are annual print handbooks of population and consumer spending databases by zip code or U.S. county. Pinpoint’s zip code databases are broken out by U.S. state and available for immediate purchase and download on its website [www.pinpointdemographics.com](http://www.pinpointdemographics.com). Free sample zip code data is available on [www.uszipcodedemographics.com](http://www.uszipcodedemographics.com).

#### Top Ten Cities for Audio/Visual Equipment Consumer Spending, 2011

1. Weston, Mass. 02493
2. Wellesley Hills, Mass. 02481
3. Newton Center, Mass. 02459
4. Minneapolis, Minn. 55446
5. Danville, Calif. 94506
6. Novi, Mich. 48374
7. Allen, Texas 75013
8. Wellesley, Mass. 02482
9. Southlake, Texas 76092
10. Coppell, Texas 75019