Proto Labs Launches Cool Idea! Award to Support Tomorrow's Innovators

MAPLE PLAIN, Minn. – April 11, 2011 –Proto Labs [1], the worlds fastest manufacturer of CNC machined and injection-molded parts, has announced the launch of its Cool Idea! award, a new program designed to give product designers the opportunity to bring innovative products to life. Proto Labs will provide $100,000 worth of prototyping and short-run production services to award recipients.

"Were extremely excited to launch the Cool Idea! [2]awardbecause we know theres a single Cool Idea at the foundation of every innovation that changes our lives for the better," said Brad Cleveland, CEO of Proto Labs. "In fact, the success of our company is due to a cool idea that made quick-turn injection molded prototypes a reality.Were eager to propel the cycle forward by supporting the next generation of innovators who may otherwise lack the resources to get their ideas to market."

Unlike other awards that recognize products or innovative design after the product has already been created, the Cool Idea! program will help designers take their product idea or part from a 3D CAD model to its first-run production stage by utilizing Proto Labs proprietary Firstcut CNC machining or Protomold injection-molding services. In order to be eligible for consideration, Cool Idea! applicants must clearly demonstrate the benefits of their product to the end-user and why they believe it qualifies as a â€˜cool idea.

"Were in the business of ideas," said Proto Labs founder and CTO Larry Lukis. "Our single focus is to provide product designers with the easiest, fastest and least-expensive way to obtain low volumes of parts based on their 3D CAD design. The Cool Idea! award takes our mission one step further by showing our support for innovative thinking and enabling designers to bring their cool ideas to life."

For more information about Cool Idea!, visit www.protolabs.com/coolidea [2].

About Proto Labs
Proto Labs has radically changed the economics and lead times associated with low-volume production of CNC machined and injection molded parts through the use of proprietary software running on a compute cluster at over 3 trillion floating point operations per second. Proto Labs offers two quick-turn services in North America, Europe and Japan: Firstcut (www.firstcut.com [3]) CNC machining and Protomold (www.protomold.com [4]) injection molding, both capable of providing parts in as fast as one business day. Design engineers who use Proto Labs forprototypes and short-run production can upload a CAD file at any one of Proto Labs online sites, get a quote and place an order for Proto Labs services directly online. For more information, visit: www.protolabs.com [1].

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Links:
[1] http://www.protolabs.com/
[2] http://www.protolabs.com/coolidea
[3] http://www.firstcut.com
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