Proto Labs Announces SkyLight as Latest Cool Idea!

MAPLE PLAIN, Minn. – Dec. 28, 2011 – The latest recipient of the Proto Labs Cool Idea! [1]Award, SkyLight [2], aims to make a big impact on global healthcare and science education. Proto Labs [3] – the leading online and technology-enabled manufacturer of quick-turn prototype and short-run parts – provided their services to help co-founders, Andy Miller and Tess Bakke, launch their product internationally.
SkyLight is a device that connects any smartphone to any microscope. This universal plastic mount allows older microscopes to be upgraded to the digital age, and can help transform global healthcare, telemedicine, science education and research capabilities. The device enables scientists, doctors, teachers and students to use technology already at their disposal in new ways. Using the Skylight, people around the world are able to share images and videos via their smartphone. Skype or FaceTime can also be used to collaborate in real-time, by enabling images from the microscope to be clearly transmitted to others via the smartphone. With the help of the SkyLight, a healthcare worker in a third world country can capture and send diagnostic images to a trained expert able to make a vital diagnosis. As a Cool Idea! Award recipient, Proto Labs provided SkyLight with CNC machining for prototyping, followed by injection molding tooling and the accompanying plastic parts.

"SkyLight offers users in a variety of fields the ability to digitally capture and share scientific discoveries that may otherwise not be seen and explored by others. This allows the advancement of not only science, but research, education and even hobbyist photographers," said Proto Labs founder and CTO Larry Lukis. "An intuitive product that is designed to further enhance healthcare, telemedicine and science education on a global level is exactly the type of innovative thinking we want to recognize with the Cool Idea! Award."

"The SkyLight connects new technology to old, allowing scientific images to be captured and securely transmitted to anyone of any age," said SkyLight co-founder Andy Miller. "This award is especially exciting for us because Proto Labs helps to keep the total production cost minimal enough for this to be used as an educational resource throughout the world."

SkyLight has received critical support on Kickstarter [4], to date receiving more than $18,000 in pledges from more than 200 backers in the community to aid in the products manufacturing, packaging and distribution. Pre-orders are available through SkyLights Kickstarter page until January 2. For every five SkyLights purchased, one will be donated for global health or educational purposes.

Cool Idea! Award [3] is an award program offered by Proto Labs that gives product designers the opportunity to bring innovative products to life. During 2011, Proto

Labs provided an aggregate of up to $100,000 worth of prototyping and short-run production services to award recipients. The program will be continuing throughout 2012. For more information, visit www.protolabs.com/coolidea [1].

About Proto Labs
Proto Labs is a leading online and technology-enabled quick-turn manufacturer of low-volume CNC-machined and injection molded custom parts for prototyping and short-run production. The company provides "Real Parts, Really Fast" to product developers worldwide and has two quick-turn services in North America, Europe and Japan: Firstcut (www.firstcut.com [5]) and CNC machining and Protomold (www.protomold.com [6]) injection molding. Both are capable of providing parts in as fast as one business day. Product developers who use Proto Labs for prototypes and short-run production can upload a 3D CAD file at any one of Proto Labs online sites, get an interactive quotation and place an order for Proto Labs services directly online. For more information, visit: www.protolabs.com [7].

Posted by Sean Fenske, Editor-in-Chief, MDT

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