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Proto Labs Expands Cool Idea! Award to the European Union

Shropshire, UK – 19 Jan 2012 – After seeing the success of the first [Cool Idea!](#) Award program, [Proto Labs](#), the world's fastest manufacturer of CNC machined and injection-moulded parts, has announced the expansion of the program to include the European Union in 2012. The Cool Idea! Award, which launched in the United States last year, gives product designers the opportunity to bring innovative product ideas to life. In addition to the expansion, Proto Labs has also increased the award amount from \$100,000 to \$250,000 worth of prototyping and short-run production services.

"The response to Cool Idea! has been incredible, so we knew we wanted to expand the program's reach," said Proto Labs founder and CTO Larry Lukis.

"We're committed to supporting designers and the development of new ideas, and we can't wait to find out what kinds of ideas we'll see from a new crop of innovators!"

The Cool Idea! Award was created with the belief that there are many great product ideas that don't get off the ground due to lack of resources and funds. Unlike other awards that recognise products or innovative design after the product has already launched, the Cool Idea! Award program helps designers take their product idea or part from a 3D CAD model to its first-run production stage with Proto Labs' proprietary Firstcut CNC machining and/or Protomold



injection-moulding services. In order to be eligible for consideration, Cool Idea! Award applicants must demonstrate the benefits of their product to the end-user and explain what makes it a 'cool idea'.

Cool Idea! Award recipients make up a wide range of industries and product offerings.

Past [winners](#) include:

- **Don Ladanyi, TruFlavorWare:** flatware to help alleviate metal sensitivity for chemotherapy patients
- **Rice University, R-one Robots:** swarm robots to improve engineering literacy
- **Whirlwind Wheelchair International, RoughRider:** highly durable wheelchair to handle rough terrain
- **Matt Nestor, QuicKaddy:** magnetic hex key case to easily store and remove a tool
- **Andy Miller and Tess Bakke, SkyLight:** adapter device that connects smartphones to microscopes to digitally capture and share scientific images

For more information about the Cool Idea! Award, visit the [Cool Idea!](#) website.

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About Proto Labs®

Based in Shropshire in the UK, Proto Labs Limited has radically changed the economics and lead times associated with the production of prototype and low-volume parts for European manufacturers. Proto Labs' customers include companies from all sectors such as medical, aerospace, automotive and consumer electronics. With two service offerings: Firstcut® delivers machined parts (ideal for quantities of 1-10 parts) in over 30 production-intent materials including aluminium and brass while Protomold® delivers injection-moulded



plastic parts (ideal for quantities of 10-10,000+) in just about any production-intent material. Using an 'ultra-fast' compute-cluster Proto Labs offers a web-based quoting system which includes a detailed manufacturability analysis and an accurate all-in production price in just hours **and** can ship orders in as little as one business day. For more information please visit www.protolabs.co.uk

About Protomold®

Protomold is the injection-moulding service offered by Proto Labs, Limited. Designers and engineers can submit a 3D CAD model of a part to the Protomold web-based quoting system, ProtoQuote®, and receive a detailed 3D model manufacturability analysis and an accurate all-in production price in hours rather than weeks. With ProtoQuote, customers can easily react to last-minute design changes, uploading as many iterations as they need to get the right model, material and cost. This in turn greatly reduces the time-to-market for a new product. In addition to all this, Protomold can deliver injection-moulded prototype and low-volume plastic parts manufactured from a choice of hundreds of production-intent materials in as little as one business day. For more information please visit www.protomold.co.uk

About Firstcut®

Firstcut is the machining service offered by Proto Labs, Limited. Designers and engineers can submit a 3D CAD model of a part to the firstcut web-based quoting system, FirstQuote®, and receive a detailed 3D model manufacturability analysis and an accurate all-in production price in just hours rather than weeks. With FirstQuote, customers can easily react to last-minute design changes, uploading as many iterations as they need to get the right model, material and cost. This in turn greatly reduces the time-to-market for a new product. Firstcut allows customers to make a fully functional prototype much earlier in the development cycle from a range of over 30 production-intent materials such as



ABS, Nylon, PEEK, aluminium or brass produced in as little as one business day. For more information please visit www.firstcut.eu/gb

For initial enquiries about Proto Labs/Firstcut/Protomold, please contact Richard Vaughan, European Marketing Manager at richard.vaughan@protolabs.co.uk (+44(0)1952 683031) or visit www.protolabs.co.uk

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