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### ***Fuel-cell technology leads charge towards Proto Labs Cool Idea! Award*** *VOTO brings affordable phone charging and lighting options to developing countries*

MAPLE PLAIN, MINN.—Nov. 19, 2013—The latest recipient of a Proto Labs (NYSE: PRLB) Cool Idea! Award, VOTO, uses fuel cell technology to transform heat into electricity that can be used for mobile phone charging or LED lighting. This handheld device is helping bring affordable electricity to developing countries.

The VOTO consists of a fuel cell box, fuel cards, a plastic handle that houses a NiMH battery, a white LED and electronic circuitry. Users insert the supplied fuel cards, wood, charcoal, food waste, or even cow dung into the fuel cell box, which is then placed into the middle of a camping stove. Once the stove is lit and the fuel cell box heats up, electricity is captured and stored in the NiMH battery. After the fire cools, the VOTO is disconnected and is ready to charge a phone or power its built-in LED light.

According to Point Source Power, the company behind VOTO, Africa alone has more than 650 million mobile phone subscribers, most of which do not have electricity in their homes, and must travel to charge them. Additionally, kerosene lamps are the current standard for home lighting. "We intend to displace dirty, toxic and expensive kerosene lamps with an intuitive LED lighting and phone-charging product that people enjoy using, and which is affordable to the billions of people living without access to modern electricity," says Craig Jacobson, Point Source Power CEO.

"The VOTO solves an ever-present problem facing residents of developing nations through practical means. By incorporating a device that's already used in daily life – a camping stove – this product brings increased quality of life to residents of those countries," says Larry Lukis, Founder and Chairman of Proto Labs.

Before applying to the Cool Idea! Award, Point Source Power produced nearly 100 prototypes built of parts sourced from big box home repair stores to those made with 3D printers. "We turned to Proto Labs because we needed a professional-looking product that would allow us to move forward with broader sales and distribution," Jacobson says. As part of the Cool Idea! Award, Proto Labs produced moulds and subsequent production of the parts that make up the VOTO handle.

Launched in 2011, the Proto Labs Cool Idea! Award grants a total of \$250,000 each year to entrepreneurs developing new products in the United States and Europe. Unlike other

product awards that recognise products after they're in mass production and on store shelves, the Cool Idea! Award is meant to help cool ideas come to life in the form of real products. For more information about the Cool Idea! Award and how to apply visit <http://www.protolabs.co.uk/CoolIdea>.

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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](http://www.protolabs.co.uk)

### **About Point Source Power**

Point Source Power makes fuel cell systems that generate electricity from renewable biomass for people without access to an electric grid. The company works with families in developing countries to ensure its products are culturally relevant, intuitive to use and financially accessible. For more information on Point Source Power, the VOTO and its capabilities, check out [www.pointsourcepower.com](http://www.pointsourcepower.com).

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