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Wearable device that turns body movement into smartphone charge wins Proto Labs Cool Idea! Award

AMPY captures and converts kinetic energy into mobile power for phone charging.

MAPLE PLAIN, MINN.—October 9, 2014—The creators of a wearable kinetic device called AMPY have been presented with the latest Proto Labs Cool Idea! Award. AMPY lets users discreetly capture and convert their daily physical activity into charging power for their smartphones.

“Wearable devices are playing an increasingly more important role in daily life,” says Proto Labs founder, Larry Lukis. “AMPY embodies the spirit of the wearable segment with its effortless user integration, but simultaneously offers an environmentally friendly kinetic alternative to wall chargers.”

The compact device can be strapped to person’s arm, leg or hip, or carried inside a backpack or messenger’s bag, where it charges anytime movement is detected. A user can then plug their smartphone into AMPY to restore the phone’s battery life. “A typical day of walking — about 8,000 to 10,000 steps — gives you another three hours of smartphone battery life, and if you add another 30-minute workout that day, you’d get around 6 additional hours,” says Tejas Shastry, CEO of the Chicago-based startup.

At the heart of the device is its linear inductor. “We developed all of the proprietary architecture for the internal conductor inside AMPY,” explains the company’s technical head, Mike Geier. “It’s an area that we had to invest significant prototyping hours towards and equipment to create. The result is a product completely unique to the wearable space.”

Shastry, Geier and fellow co-founder, Alex Smith, are all Ph.D. Candidates in engineering at Northwestern University in Evanston. Through the help of two accelerator programs along with their recent Proto Labs service grant, they’ve begun testing the device within an initial demographic of young, active urbanites, and launched a crowdfunding campaign on [Kickstarter](#) today.

The Cool Idea! Award provided the team with the tooling and subsequent low-volume injection molded production run for the plastic AMPY clip and housings. The parts will be used in devices shipped for pilot testing as well as upper-level crowdfunding perks for contributors. Shastry says they hope to follow the campaign with an early 2015 full-market release online.

Since 2011, the Cool Idea! Award has provided more than \$750,000 in Proto Labs prototyping and short-run production services to entrepreneurs developing new products in the United States and Europe. Unlike other product awards that recognize products after they're in mass production and on store shelves, the Cool Idea! Award is meant to help innovative ideas come to life. For more information about the Cool Idea! Award and to apply, visit www.protolabs.com/coolidea.

About Proto Labs

Proto Labs (NYSE: PRLB) is an online and technology-enabled rapid manufacturer of custom parts for prototyping and low- to mid-volume production. By utilizing quick-turn injection molding, CNC machining and additive manufacturing processes, Proto Labs can produce parts within days for product designers and engineers worldwide. Go to www.protolabs.com for more information about the company and its services.

About AMPY

In 2013, three Ph.D. Candidates in engineering at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois began development on a wearable device that would convert kinetic energy into hours of charging power for smartphones. In tandem with Northwestern's incubator at the Farley Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation and downtown Chicago's 1871 accelerator program, they designed, prototyped, tested and are now nearing the launch of AMPY. For more information, visit <http://www.getampy.com/>.

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