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Skyven Wins Proto Labs Cool Idea! Award for Dual-Purpose Solar Panel System
Advanced system blends multiple solar technologies to produce efficient electricity and hot water

MAPLE PLAIN, MINN. — January 22, 2015 — Proto Labs, Inc. (NYSE: PRLB), a leading online and technology-enabled quick-turn manufacturer, has presented its next Cool Idea! Award to Skyven Technologies for its development of an innovative solar panel system. The manufacturing grant will help the Texas-based company further advance its Skyven Cogen System that simultaneously produces energy for both electrical power and heated water.

The system integrates three technologies — traditional solar photovoltaic (PV), advanced concentrating photovoltaic (CPV) and solar water heating — into a single, multi-tasking solar panel. A network of panels can be installed on commercial and industrial rooftops, which then provides companies, hotels, factories and other large facilities access to more efficient electricity and water heating.

“The solar industry is growing tremendously,” explains Skyven founder and Ph.D. Arun Gupta. “It’s expanding by double digits every year, it is a nearly $15 billion industry in the U.S. alone, and it is the #2 source of new energy generation in the U.S. after natural gas.” Much of that is led by increased awareness paired with the steady decrease of silicon and solar panel costs.

Gupta plans to use the Cool Idea! Award service grant on plastic and metal parts manufactured by all three of Proto Labs services. Due to the precise nature of the panels’ mechanical drivetrains, 3D printed prototypes will be built through Proto Labs’ rapid stereolithography (SL) process. Panel components will also be CNC machined and injection molded as Skyven continues to develop the manufacturability of the system. Gupta and his team are working towards the completion of their pre-production version by mid-2015 with plans for a full-market launch in 2016.

“Skyven has leveraged existing solar technologies, which have been heavily researched and proven over the past few decades, to create a completely new model that builds on each technology’s strengths,” says Proto Labs founder, Larry Lukis. “The resulting product is one that brings higher levels of solar efficiencies to a market that is always looking to reduce its users’ carbon footprint.”

Since 2011, the Cool Idea! Award has provided more than $750,000 in Proto Labs prototyping and low-volume 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-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 Skyven Technologies
Skyven's rooftop panels are designed to lower the cost of green energy for commercial and industrial facilities. Its patented solar technology combines electricity generation and water heating into a single panel. The result is twice the energy output and financial return when compared to other leading rooftop solar technologies. The Skyven Cogen System is the first and only zero-emission solution that can compete directly on the cost of heating water with natural gas, while also surpassing the electricity generation of traditional solar panels. For more information, please visit www.skyventechnologies.com.

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