

Sniffer Robotics Looks to Reduce Landfill Emissions with Help from Protolabs' Cool Idea Award

Protolabs' manufacturing grant accelerated hardware development of emissions monitoring drone aimed at preventing fugitive methane emissions and protecting the environment

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.—June 18, 2019—Digital manufacturing leader [Protolabs](#) (NYSE: PRLB) today announced that Michigan-based [Sniffer Robotics](#) has been selected as the latest [Cool Idea Award](#) winner for innovation in landfill emissions monitoring. Sniffer Robotics provides a drone-based approach to landfill health assessment and brings safety, reliability and accuracy to what has historically been a labor intensive procedure.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, landfills account for 16 percent of U.S. emissions of methane, which is 21 times more potent than other greenhouse gases. Once per quarter, at nearly 2,000 sites across the U.S., environmental technicians walk many miles per day to locate and prevent fugitive methane emissions. This process is manual and time-intensive.

Sniffer Robotics has developed a patent-pending drone-based system that flies five times faster than walking and can precisely inspect a typical landfill within one day—without risk of injury and with higher fidelity data than existing processes. Currently, the only EPA-approved method of surface emissions monitoring is by foot, but Sniffer Robotics is on an expedited path to meeting EPA regulations and anticipates achieving compliance soon. In the future, Sniffer Robotics plans to make its system available to customers as a service to enhance the accuracy and efficiency of landfill gas emissions management.

“Before, we didn’t have quality hardware designed properly to the application,” said David Barron, co-founder and CTO at Sniffer Robotics. “We cobbled together parts that sometimes fell off during test flights, and we probably would have crashed our drone because hardware issues kept cropping up. With Protolabs and the Cool Idea Award, we were able to accelerate our hardware process ahead of schedule and quickly develop a reliable, high-quality product to demo to prospective customers.”

Sniffer Robotics turned to Protolabs for its experience in [stereolithography](#) 3D printing to develop four types of custom-made parts for its drones. The components were manufactured using a polycarbonate-like plastic, which brings accuracy and durability as well as a clear cosmetic appearance.

Sniffer Robotics is addressing the need to more accurately measure fugitive methane emissions at landfills. Their work will help identify areas for emissions reductions, which will ultimately protect the environment,” said Vicki Holt, President & CEO of Protolabs. “We’re thrilled to work with Sniffer Robotics to help optimize their hardware and solve for this existing technology gap.”

About Protolabs

Protolabs is a leading digital manufacturing source for rapid prototyping and on-demand production. The company produces custom parts and assemblies in as fast as one day with automated 3D printing,

CNC machining, sheet metal fabrication, and injection molding processes. Its digital approach to manufacturing enables accelerated time to market, reduces development and production costs, and minimizes risk throughout the product life cycle. Visit protolabs.com for more information.

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