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Proto Labs Launches Rapid Magnesium Injection Molding Service

July 29, 2015

Low-volume magnesium molding bridges manufacturing gap between prototyping and production.

MAPLE PLAIN, Minn.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Jul. 29, 2015-- Proto Labs, Inc. (NYSE:PRLB) has introduced magnesium injection molding into its current rapid manufacturing services. This advanced injection molding process enables product designers and engineers to prototype using the same materials and processes used for the final part production. In addition to prototypes, Proto Labs will offer production parts in quantities of up to 5,000+ with a typical turnaround time of 15 days.

Magnesium is a strong and lightweight metal that is increasingly being used in the automotive and aerospace industries to reduce the weight of components. "In recent years, lightweighting has become a significant factor in automotive product development, for example, as engineers are being tasked with drastically reducing vehicle weight in order to improve vehicle gas mileage," says Proto Labs' engineer and product manager, Becky Cater. "We see magnesium injection molding as an important tool for achieving this."

Proto Labs' injection molding process, known also as thixomolding, is viewed as an alternative to machining and die casting processes. It involves heating chipped magnesium feedstock in the barrel of a press, where it is transformed into a gel-like state before high-speed injection into a steel mold to create the part.

Magnesium AZ-91D joins Proto Labs' current injection molding offerings that include more than a hundred thermoplastic, liquid silicone rubber, steel and stainless steel materials. "Magnesium injection molding is yet another fast and cost-effective manufacturing method for Proto Labs' customers to use as they race to quickly launch products to market," explains Cater.

About Proto Labs

Proto Labs is the world's fastest digital manufacturing source for custom prototypes and low-volume production parts. The technology-enabled company uses advanced 3D printing, CNC machining and injection molding technologies to produce parts within days. The result is an unprecedented speed-to-market value for product designers and engineers worldwide. Visit protolabs.com for more information.



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Source: Proto Labs, Inc.

Proto Labs

Bill Dietrick, 763-479-7664
bill.dietrick@protolabs.com

or

Media Contact:

Hotwire for Proto Labs
Ayla Richards, 646-561-8546
ayla.richards@hotwirepr.com