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Photo Etch Launches 3-D Rapid Prototyping Program

Aerospace engineers benefit from faster turnaround and lower costs

FORT WORTH, TX – March 21, 2005 — Photo Etch, a leading aerospace manufacturing company, has launched a new rapid prototyping program, making it the first aerospace manufacturer in the Southwest to offer three-dimensional (3D), high-definition color prototypes that can be used for concept visualization, design review, mock-ups for form and fit testing, as well as patterns for casting applications. This latest prototyping technology will reduce the industry's traditional three-week turnaround time to an average of two days and reduce costs by as much as 80 percent.

“Our clients can almost immediately see a three-dimensional, color model that meets their exact specifications,” said Randy Fry, president and chief executive officer for Photo Etch. “They can then make the changes they need and have another prototype in their hands within 48 hours, thus, facilitating collaborative engineering and inexpensively allowing for multiple design concepts.”

With 3D modeling, engineers are also better able to catch mistakes and make improvements before the design goes into production, Fry said. This prevents change requests late in the process and can further reduce costs.

Companies like Florida-based Harris Corporation have started to benefit from Photo Etch's rapid prototyping program.

“While a photograph is worth a thousand words in engineering, a prototype that provides a true sense of scale, look and feel is really priceless,” said Michael Lengyel, Systems Engineer for Harris Corporation. “And, the turnaround time on these prototypes just can't be beat.”

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To create the 3D models, Photo Etch is using the Spectrum Z510 Full Color System from Z Corporation. The printer creates an actual physical model directly from CAD and other digital data. Printed parts can be drilled, tapped, sanded, painted and electroplated to replicate the look and feel of the final product.

Photo Etch's new rapid prototyping program will also allow the manufacturer to produce production parts and fixturing when needed to meet client deadlines.

About Photo Etch

Photo Etch designs and manufactures displays and control panels used for military and commercial airborne and ground communications, as well as navigation systems. The company also manufactures flight simulation and training components. One of Photo Etch's specialties is night vision technology for airborne military operations. Photo Etch's client base includes major defense contractors like Boeing, Lockheed-Martin and Grumman Aerospace, as well as U.S. Department of Defense agencies like the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy. Founded in 1960, the aerospace company manufactures its products in accordance with ISO 9001 and SAE AS9100 quality standards. The firm operates from a 50,000-square-foot facility in Fort Worth, Texas. For more information, visit www.photo-etch.com.

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