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Emprimus, Inc., Minneapolis, has completed a global licensing agreement for its Solid Ground Grid Stability System with ABB, Zurich, Switzerland.

The transaction grants ABB worldwide rights to manufacture, market and install Emprimus' SolidGround protection system for the electric power grid in North America and around the globe. The SolidGround system is designed to protect the grid against the effects of geomagnetic storm induced currents and electromagnetic pulse-induced currents of any size, by automatically detecting and blocking DC currents from flowing through the neutral of large power transformers.

Brian Miller, managing director for ABB, said that the Emprimus SolidGround system is effective in protecting against the current flare-up of solar storms, a phenomenon expected to peak within the next several years. Solar flares of the magnitude experts are predicting have the potential to cause massive disruptions in power around the globe, similar to one in 1989 that crippled Quebec with a massive blackout affecting six million people. The potential for economic damage has grown exponentially since that time, with the advent of the "wired" world, complex and critically connected international supply chains, and the growth of cloud computing.

Miller said the Emprimus SolidGround system offers an "affordable, fully integrated and automated defense against the effects of such storms for electric utilities and their transmission systems anywhere in the world."

Alternative procedural solutions--such as switching to local gas turbine generation during periods of peak disruptive activity--are extremely expensive, he said, while the SolidGround systems to be manufactured and installed by ABB "will pay for themselves in as little as two years."

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