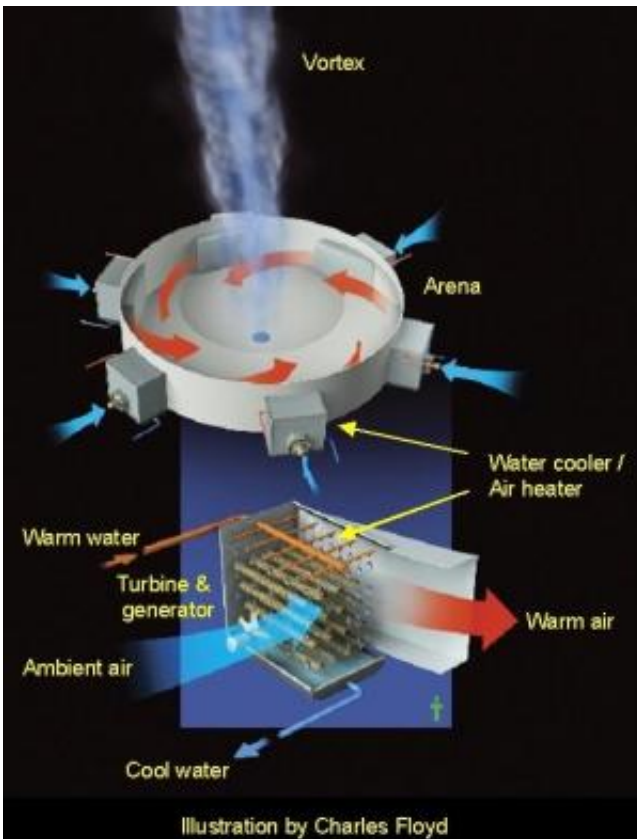


# Entrepreneur receives funding for 'tornado' power generator

December 18 2012, by Bob Yirka

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(Phys.org)—Electrical engineer and entrepreneur Louis Michaud's AVEtec company has received funding from PayPal cofounder Peter Thiel's Breakout Labs program to build an experimental Atmosphere Vortex Engine (AVE). The \$300,000 in startup funds is to go towards

building a working engine to dispel or prove the viability of using such technology to produce electricity with virtually no carbon footprint.

Michaud's idea is to use a fan to blow some of the excess heat produced by conventional power plants, into a cylindrical hollow tower, at an angle. Doing so should create a circular air current, which he says will grow stronger as it moves higher. The higher it goes the more energy it draws due to differences in temperature. The result would be a controlled man-made tornado. To put it to good use, turbines would be installed at the base of the [vortex](#) to create electricity. The original test will be conducted at Lambton College in Ontario – the tower will be 131 feet tall with a 26 foot diameter. That should be enough to create a vortex about a foot in diameter – enough to power a small turbine. It's just a [proof of concept](#), Michaud notes on his [site](#), a real-world tower would be about 25 meters in diameter, and would be capable of producing up to 200 [megawatts](#) of power using only the excess heat generated by a conventional 500 megawatt plant. Power goes up geometrically, he says, as the size of tower grows. He adds that the cost of producing electricity this way would be about 3 cents per [kilowatt hour](#), well below the typical 4 or 5 cents for [coal plants](#).

Michaud has been investigating the idea of harnessing the power of tornado's to provide electricity for several decades but until now has had problems being taken seriously by [venture capitalists](#). He adds that his company built and successfully tested an AVE prototype in 2009, hinting that he has no doubts that the new tower and turbines will work as advertised.

For those worried that a man-made tornado might get out of hand, escape its enclosure and wreak havoc on the nearby community, Michaud says that can't happen because all it would take to stop the whole process would be to turn off the fan that feeds the vortex the warm air.

**More information:** [vortexengine.ca/index.shtml](http://vortexengine.ca/index.shtml)  
[www.breakoutlabs.org/news-even ... abs-includes-an.html](http://www.breakoutlabs.org/news-even...abs-includes-an.html)

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