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ALAMEDA COUNTY PLACES IN TOP 10 IN NATIONAL "DIGITAL COUNTIES'' SURVEY

Alameda County's innovative use of technology to improve services and engage the community has once again brought it a Top 10 finish among counties across America in the Digital Counties Survey conducted by the Center for Digital Government (CDG) and the National Association of Counties (NACo). Alameda County, which finished 7th in this year's survey of counties with populations of 500,000 or more, was called one of the country's most innovative counties by judges who cited numerous ongoing initiatives focusing on citizen engagement, open data and transparent government.

"We are thrilled to be recognized once again in this prestigious national competition,'' said Susan S. Muranishi, Alameda County Administrator. "We are proving that technology can play a pivotal role in delivering better local government services to our community. It's great that our progress is gaining the attention of our peers around the country.''

It is the second straight year the Alameda County has placed in the Top 10 in the Digital Counties Survey, which reflects new technology initiatives as well as progress the County has made in adding new technology to several ongoing projects. In the past year, Alameda County has undertaken a significant expansion of its Open Data Portal, which now includes more than 200 data sets that are available to the public. These Open Data sets now include detailed crime reports and restaurant inspection data. In addition, the County is making extensive efforts to make many of its award-winning websites mobile friendly.

The County also continues to expand on its selection of innovative Web and mobile apps that make key information – such as voter data and comprehensive property records - easy for residents to access. Also driving innovation are the internal and external hackathons the County continues to sponsor, events that provide a huge boost to efforts to develop new tools for both employees and residents. The public-facing AC Apps Challenge events have included 680 participants over the past three years, leading to 84 app ideas and eight working apps. The internal hackathon, Rethink AC, brings together employees from across the County organization to create new tools and efficiencies, like a one-stop shop for permits now being developed.

"We are using high-tech innovation and technology to create a more accessible and transparent County government that can respond quickly to our residents' changing needs.'' said Tim Dupuis, Alameda County's Chief Information Officer.

Added Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson, a member of the NACo Board of Directors: "Citizen Engagement through technology has proven to be a powerful way to strengthen ties with our residents and provide them with information about Alameda County services. It is what our tech-savvy constituents have come to expect."

Recent initiatives include a reciprocal partnership with Sonoma County that will allow either county to work from the other's technology infrastructure should their systems be knocked out by a major earthquake or other natural disaster. Meanwhile, the County's Information Technology Department is upgrading computer networks to increase performance of the computer systems used by all departments, including the Sheriff's Office and Fire Department The County also continues to make significant headway in engaging local youth through programs that include student technology internships that challenge local students to create apps that benefit the community. The County's award-winning Youth Leadership Academy includes a new component where young participants offer their ideas for apps and other technology upgrades to help with the delivery of vital local government services.