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Public Invited to Participate in Alameda County Apps Challenge 2013 in Berkeley

Cash prizes awarded for civic-minded web and mobile applications

“Got code?” is the theme of the **Alameda County Apps Challenge 2013.1**, the second in a series of unique day-long events designed to challenge the public to create web and mobile applications using Alameda County open data sets. The Apps Challenge will run from **8:30 am to 7:00 pm on Saturday, April 27, 2013 at Berkeley High School, one block from the Downtown Berkeley BART.**

The Berkeley event is expected to bring together more than 150 software developers, community members, activists and entrepreneurs for a full day of creativity, collaboration and innovation. A Grand Prize of \$3000 will be awarded to the most inventive and user-friendly app that benefits Alameda County residents, businesses and visitors. A second prize of \$1500, a third prize of \$500 and honorable mentions will also be awarded.

The Apps Challenge is part of a nation-wide movement stemming in part from President Obama’s Open Government Initiative, which directed government agencies to increase transparency and implement open data policies. Alameda County is one of the first counties in California to host an Apps Challenge, also known as a “hackathon,” “hack day,” or “code fest” in the technology community.

“The Apps Challenge is one example of the many ways the County is using cutting-edge technology to increase government transparency and assist residents in accessing vital information,” noted Supervisor Keith Carson, President of the Alameda County Board of Supervisors. “I am excited to co-host this event in the heart of my district in Berkeley, a city known for both its civic activists and technology entrepreneurs.”

At the Apps Challenge, Alameda County invites participation from residents of all skill levels and age groups: professional and novice developers, high school and college students, seniors, and residents with no technical background but a passion for civic engagement. Each team at the hackathon will include a mixture of coders and “idea” people working together to create functional and appealing apps.

Building on the success of the first Apps Challenge in December, the County has forged partnerships with the University of California Center for Information Technology Research in the Interest of Society (CITRIS) Data and Democracy Initiative, The Berkeley Chamber of Commerce, city mayors and others to maximize outreach to programmers, students and members of the community.

County Administrator Susan S. Muranishi hopes the Berkeley hackathon can tap into the same creativity and community engagement that made the first County-sponsored event so successful. “The events are offering new ways that we can raise public awareness about the many services Alameda County

provides,” she said. “They also are an exciting way we can leverage the vast pool of talent and creativity available in our community to enhance and increase accessibility to the diverse array of County services.”

Berkeley Mayor Tom Bates' office serves on the Apps Challenge 2013 Host Committee. Mayor Bates sees the city as an ideal location for a hackathon: “Berkeley is a hub of innovation and educational excellence, home to world-class institutions like UC Berkeley and the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.”

Tim Dupuis, Alameda County’s Interim Director of Information Technology, is excited about the many new ways Alameda County is using technology to engage the public. “As we strengthen ties with the community this way, we also develop a great source of new ideas on how we can better meet the needs of the people we serve,” Dupuis said.

On April 27, participants will use at least one of the nearly 100 data sets from the Alameda County Data Sharing Initiative available on the portal <http://data.acgov.org>. The data covers a wide range of topics, including public safety data, a listing of Certified Green Businesses, public health data, maps of senior services and more.

Previous winners of the Alameda County Apps Challenge include:

- **AC BookIt!** – a clever mobile app that allows users to check if a book is available in the Alameda County library system, reserve the book and get the library’s address. Available on the Apple App Store.
- **ACPR Finder** - an app developed by high school students that sifts through County Parks and Recreation Data to provide useful information about local parks, trails and recreation facilities.
- **SNAPMapper** - the Yelp for food-stamp users, which shows stores that accept food stamps and is organized by distance, price or quality.

The cost to participate in the Alameda County Apps Challenge is \$15 for general admission and \$10 for students and seniors. Government employees may participate for free. For more information about the Apps Challenge and to register for the event, please visit: <http://code.acgov.org>.

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