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NEW ALAMEDA COUNTY PERMIT PORTAL IS ONE-STOP RESOURCE TO EASE PERMIT PROCESS

Alameda County this week is launching its new Permit Portal, a one-stop-shop for business licenses and permits. The Portal is an online guide that helps residents through the permitting process to complete major property upgrades, start businesses or undertake many other tasks regulated by local government.

The Alameda County Permit Portal, available at permit.acgov.org, simplifies the permit process by allowing individuals and business operators to search based on address or need. Users can also browse permits by category and view the most popular permits issued by Alameda County and other local jurisdictions.

“This is a major breakthrough in terms of simplifying the ways we can help our residents and businesses in many important decisions they make,” said Susan S. Muranishi, Alameda County Administrator.

The new Permit Portal benefits from an unusual amount of cross-agency collaboration. Not only did employees from several Alameda County departments contribute to its design, but the portal provides information about all locally issued permits – not just those required by Alameda County, but by cities and special districts as well.

The Permit Portal results from a concerted long-term effort by Alameda County to find innovative new ways to deliver traditional government services that enhance access and efficiency. From a growing suite of mobile apps and online resources, to community “hackathons” that leverage residents’ best ideas for improving local services – the new Permit Portal is the latest in the County’s arsenal of tools to ease residents’ interactions with government, improve public participation, and enhance the quality of life.

The Permit Portal also is the first new tool to result from Alameda County’s groundbreaking partnership with technology-giant Google through company’s Government Innovation Labs project earlier this year. The project was designed to bring to government the same “moonshot” thinking that Google brings to its constant search for new innovations – from high-altitude Wi-Fi balloons to driverless cars – that just might change the way we live.

Google developers who assisted in the six-week partnership with Alameda County found the portal to be exactly the type of “10X” idea that government agencies should be pursuing to enhance services in the Technology Age.

Over the past several months, the County’s Information Technology Department worked with a multitude of local agencies to build new Permit Portal – with an eye on eliminating the confusion that often accompanies major projects such as building new swimming pools and home additions, or expanding a business.

Tim Dupuis, Alameda County’s Chief Information Officer, said the County will continue to produce new tools and resources to enhance access to local services. Projects currently in process include powerful enhancements to the County’s Emergency Preparedness Portal, ready.acgov.org, which will leverage GPS mapping elements to allow quick exchanges between emergency providers and residents on the front lines of a fast-breaking emergency.

“Through technology and innovation, we are coming up with exciting new ways to make County services easier to use and more effective in providing what residents want from their local government,” Dupuis said. “We also are finding ourselves much more able to adapt quickly to the changing needs in our community.”