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Nov. 4, 2017

Code4PA Hackathon Winners Exemplify Innovation, Civic Engagement Using Commonwealth Open Data

Next Hackathon to Focus on Fighting Opioid Addiction

Harrisburg, PA – The winners of the first-ever commonwealth data hackathon have created a website that uses crash data and predictive analytics to help the motorists avoid potential accidents in the future.

Nearly 200 people participated in the Code4PA hackathon, which kicked-off on September 29 in Harrisburg and Philadelphia.

“With Code4PA, we want to create a more collaborative and empowering form of citizen participation in government. It provides a forum for people to collaborate and be directly involved in addressing challenges that are important to them,” said Secretary of Administration Sharon Minnich. “I want to thank all of the participants who dedicated their time and talent over the past month to developing innovative projects and ideas with commonwealth data.”

The site, www.knowPA.com, can advise users of potentially of unsafe driving conditions near their homes for next 7 days based on historical crash data, inclement weather and other information. The site also includes location-based data on water quality, air quality, contagious diseases, and jobs and training. Public safety agencies can also use the site to proactively deploy resources and address issues that may contribute to crashes.

The winning team is made up of Harrisburg-area employees of TE Connectivity: Muthu Sabarethinam, Arun Thirunavukkarasu, Kathir Ramalingam, Reshma Keerthi, Vijay Kumar Ravi, Vivek Lakhani and Yao Yu.

The Code4PA hackathon challenged technology professionals, designers, entrepreneurs, students and other “civic hackers” to develop prototypes and apps to enhance citizens services, increase transparency and drive innovation.

The teams leveraged datasets from the open data portal, <https://data.pa.gov/>, including vehicle crashes, radon, restaurant inspections, historic locations and public health, for use in their projects. Today, they pitched their ideas to a panel of judges, who evaluated them based on criteria such as impact and utility, quality and innovative nature, use of datasets and use of technology, as well as the team pitch.

The winning team will receive special recognition, including a meet and greet with Governor Wolf, networking with commonwealth executives and publicity through press and social media.

In addition to the grand prize winner, special prizes were awarded for innovation, best team, best use of dataset/API, best use case, best use of geospatial technology and best prototype or app design.

The next Code4PA hackathon, planned for the fall of 2018, will concentrate on the opioid crisis and how data can help be used to help save lives from addiction.

Code4PA is hosted in partnership with Harrisburg University of Science and Technology, Code for Philly, Technology Council of Central PA and industry sponsors.

Event website: <https://www.code4pa.tech/>.

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