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Press Release   July 11, 2011

MTA Headquarters   IMMEDIATE

MTA Launches Competition for Best Transportation-Related Apps

New Sets of Data Add More Opportunities for Customer-Focused Apps

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) today launched MTA App Quest, a competition challenging tech developers to create software applications that increase access to information and improve the travel experience for customers of New York's subways, buses, railroads and bridges and tunnels. ChallengePost, a global marketplace for challenges and community-driven innovation, is powering and co-sponsoring MTA App Quest with the MTA.

The winning app developer will receive the grand prize of $5,000. Smaller cash prizes will go to the developers of apps that are judged to do the most to help train and bus riders and bridge and tunnel motorists better navigate the MTA's system and those that are deemed most popular by the public. The MTA is not contributing financially to the prize money pool. For a complete list of prizes and contest rules, visit http://MTAAppQuest.com.

"Over the past two years, we've made more and more information available to app developers, and we're thrilled that they're taking this information and using it to benefit our customers," said MTA Chairman Jay H. Walder. "Now, through this competition, we are taking the next step to engage with the app developer community to encourage the creation of even more useful apps."

This competition is the latest component of the MTA's wide-ranging effort to improve the way that customers access information about New York's transportation network, from activation of countdown clocks in subway stations, to real-time bus tracking, to improvements to the MTA's website, redesigned maps, clearer audio announcements, and more.

To provide more data for developers to use as they design apps for MTA customers, the MTA is releasing new data sets to complement its existing schedule, geographic and other data sets. The newly released data sets consist of:

Historical data showing times and locations of train movements on the 1,2,3 and 4,5,6 subway lines throughout May 2011.
Location data of resources inside subway stations such as platforms, elevators, turnstiles and station agent booths.
Shapes of bus routes.
Locations of outside retailers who sell E-ZPasses.
Performance data for all MTA Agencies from 2008 to present, including on-time performance, ridership, mean distance between failures, elevator and escalator availability, and injury rates.

To maximize the amount of data available to contestants, the MTA will continue to make additional new data sets available through July 21 for developers to use.

Winners will be selected by a panel of judges made up of technology and transportation experts, including:

Jen Chung, Executive Editor, Gothamist, and Co-Founder, Gothamist LLC
Jeff Ferzoco, Creative and Technology Director, Regional Plan Association
Stephen Goldsmith, Deputy Mayor for Operations, City of New York
Mark Gorton, Founder and Chairman, OpenPlans and Founder, Tower Research Capital LLC
Wael Hibri, Chief Enterprise Information Officer, Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Noel Hidalgo, Director of Engagement Technologies, World Economic Forum
Ben Kabak, Blogger and Founder, Second Avenue Sagas
Lawrence Levy, Executive Dean, National Center for Suburban Studies at Hofstra University
Rachel Sterne, Chief Digital Officer, City of New York

Submissions to the MTA App Quest are due by Sept. 26, and the public will be invited to view and vote for all submissions for three weeks this fall. Winners will be announced in November. The competition is open to individuals and organizations in the United States (and its territories) and submitted apps should run on the web, desktop computers, tablets, and/or mobile phone platforms.

About ChallengePost

ChallengePost is a web platform that enables government agencies, corporations, non-profits, and individuals to challenge the public to solve problems. Challenge sponsors receive innovative solutions and increased awareness around important initiatives. Members of the public receive recognition and rewards. ChallengePost has powered over 200 challenges on behalf of some of the world's largest organizations. http://ChallengePost.com