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MTA Press Releases

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MTA & AT&T Announce App Quest 3.0 Winners

'YoTrain!' and 'Departures NYC' Take Home the Grand Prizes with their Innovative Solutions to Improve the Commutes for Millions of New Yorkers and Tourists

An app that notifies riders about train arrival times with voice alerts as they approach the stations they most frequent and an app that allows riders to simply point their smartphone towards a bus stop to see departure times are the Grand Prize winners in this year's App Quest 3.0. Sponsored by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, AT&T, Transit Wireless, and New York University's Center for Urban Science and Progress (CUSP), App Quest 3.0 is a global competition to solicit development of new mobile solutions designed to help improve commutes for millions of subway, bus and rail riders across the five boroughs.

Over the past four months, developers from New York, across the United States and around the world developed technologies that utilize real time MTA data to improve the everyday lives of New Yorkers during their commutes around the city. Forty-three teams from ten countries submitted their apps, and eight received prizes today.

A panel of leading experts in digital, transit and tech from across the state judged the competition. MTA Chairman and CEO Thomas F. Prendergast and Marissa Shorenstein, New York State President of AT&T announced the winners at an awards ceremony and app demonstration in Grand Central Terminal's Vanderbilt Hall, where they were joined by New York State Chief Digital Officer & Deputy Secretary for Technology Rachel Haot, ChallengePost CEO Brandon Kessler, Transit Wireless CEO William Bayne, App Quest judges and design teams.

The winners are:

• Grand Prize ($10,000): Best Accessibility App for MTA Customers with Disabilities: YoTrain!

• Runner-up Prize ($7,500): Best Accessibility App for Disabled MTA Customers: NYC Accessible

• Grand Prize ($7,500): Best Consumer/Transit Rider App: Departures NYC

• Runner-up Prize ($5,000): Best Consumer/Transit Rider App: TravAlarm

• Popular Choice ($5,000): 1-Touch NYC

• Large Organization Recognition Award: iRideNYC

• Best Way-Finding Application for Novice Transit Riders ($5,000): Departures NYC

• Best Data Visualization App ($5,000): ReMap

• Best Crowdsourcing App ($5,000): TravAlarm

• Honorable Mention: Navigate

The competition also incorporated the use of experimental wireless PROMObeacons. PROMObeacons were placed throughout the Grand Central-42nd Street subway station and allow enabled apps to know the precise location of an app user within a subway station in an effort to create solutions to help riders with disabilities or people unfamiliar with New York's transit system navigate safely.

"The real winners out of this challenge are MTA customers," said **Thomas F. Prendergast MTA Chairman and CEO**. "We are delighted that so many talented and enthusiastic tech teams dedicated their energies toward helping our customers. Apps offer a very exciting and powerful potential to assist our customers and improve their experiences with us, and we want to encourage the development of great apps."

"As we gain greater access to more technological tools, including real time and advanced data we are presented with a unique opportunity to improve the commuting experience for the millions of MTA customers who ride the subways, buses and rails each day," said **Marissa Shorenstein, New York State President, AT&T**. "AT&T is thrilled to be part of the innovation process that develops advanced solutions to utilize mobile communication and benefit the greater public."

"Congratulations to all of the winners of the third annual MTA App Quest Challenge. Improving customer service and efficiency through technology is vital to Governor Cuomo's vision for New York State, and the MTA App Quest is a powerful example of the innovation made possible by the Governor's

award-winning Open NY digital data platform," said **Rachel Haot, New York State Chief Digital Officer & Deputy Secretary for Technology**. "I want to thank the MTA, AT&T and participants across New York State for their hard work to make this the best App Quest yet."

"As we continue to rollout wireless connectivity to the underground, we were extremely inspired to join the MTA and AT&T this year and add a new layer to app innovation and development to App Quest 3.0 by installing PROMObeacons as part of the competition." said **William Bayne, CEO of Transit Wireless**. "Beacon technology is the wave of the future and Transit Wireless is the first company to "test" this technology in an underground transportation system globally. We are excited to see how these new apps involving beacon technology can benefit the New York City riders. "

"The winners of this year's AppQuest competition raised the bar once again, helping both veteran straphangers and first time riders," said **Brendan Kessler, CEO of ChallengePost**. "I was particularly impressed with how NYC accessible addresses the needs of disabled passengers and Departures NYC uses Augmented Reality for bus schedules."

"App Quest's award recipients clearly demonstrate how impactful data can be in addressing real world issues of city residents. The mission of NYU's Center for Urban Science & Progress is to apply data analytics to challenges facing cities like New York," said **Steve Koonin, Director of New York University's Center for Urban Science and Progress**. "As such, CUSP was delighted to host AT&T Transit Tech Developer Day in November 2014 and to partner with the App Quest team in pursuit of common goals that will benefits millions of New York City residents."

The panel of judges that selected the winning apps included:

• **Barbara Cohn**, Chief Data Officer, NYS Office of Information Technology Services

• **Rachel Haot**, New York State Chief Digital Officer & Deputy Secretary for Technology

• **Brad Hargreaves**, Co-Founder of General Assembly

• **Todd Haselton**, Executive Director of Mobile, TechnoBuffalo

• **Scott Heiferman**, CEO and a Co-Founder of Meetup

• **Andrew Nicklin**, New York State Director of #OpenNY

• **Michael Salvato**, Program Manager, Enterprise Asset Management, MTA

• **Marissa Shorenstein**, President of AT&T New York

• **Omar Usmani**, Executive Partner at Aeon Nexus Corp.

More information about the winning apps:

YoTrain! Using voice alerts, YoTrain automatically notifies riders when next train will arrive when they are within half a block of any station pre-set in their app. Riders also receive a text message so train arrival times are right in a rider's hand when they pull out their smart phone.

NYC Accessible provides riders real time information through email and/or text messages on subway station accessibility, ensuring riders know which services are available at individual stations around the city. Information includes ADA accessibility, all elevator/escalator locations and service information, current elevator/escalator outages, and estimated return dates. The web-based app also allows riders the opportunity to share information about their commutes with other riders, the MTA and NYC Accessible.

Departures NYC shows departure times at all bus stops in New York City in a simple and unique fashion. Riders simply point their smartphone at the direction of a bus stop and the departure times are displayed on their screen. The real-time data also includes information about delays and service alerts. Riders can also retrieve departure information at other stops viewed on a map.

TravAlarm acts as a journey planner and delay detector for riders across the five boroughs. Riders have the ability to set alarms for specific trips and destinations so they can be informed if their normal modes of transportation are experiencing delays. Users of the app have an extra incentive with local businesses signing on as partners to offer discounts or benefits to riders through promotions redeemable directly from the smartphone.

1-TouchNYC utilizes near field communication (NFC) and QR codes to connect riders to real time information about the transportation service options near them. Riders simply scan smart service posters for immediate access to information about train arrival and departure times or how many bikes are available at the nearest bike-share station.

iRideNYC links riders with information on the most up-to-date transit availability – including bike shares, subways and buses – through a webmap. Riders can determine which transit options are closest to their current location and will deliver them to their destination most easily.

ReMap provides commuters with a real time subway map that visually displays service changes on the map itself. Utilizing MTA service information, the map redraws itself for night and weekend travel.

Navigate is specifically designed to assist visually impaired riders navigate individual subways stations. Riders are able to receive relevant, location-based directional information about where they are within a station, where specific stairways lead and what platform they are currently on.

The MTA first launched App Quest in 2012 and has received more than 125 app submissions and given out $100,000 in prizes over the life of the competition. For a complete list of the winning apps from previous competitions, see the press releases from 2012 and 2013. While the MTA has released nearly 10 of its own official apps, the MTA also encourages its customers to use apps built by third party developers by including them in its

online App Center gallery, which can be found here. Since the App Quest competition was first launched, Transit Wireless has activated Wi Fi and wireless service at 76 subway stations in Manhattan and Queens.

To see photos from Thursday's event, click here for the MTA Flickr album.

About the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA)

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority is North America's largest public transportation network, serving a population of 14.9 million people in the 5,000-square-mile area fanning out from New York City through Long Island, the Hudson Valley, and southwestern Connecticut. MTA subways, buses, and railroads provide 2.63 billion trips each year to New Yorkers – the equivalent of about one in every three users of mass transit in the United States and two-thirds of the nation's rail riders.

About ChallengePost

At ChallengePost, software developers share their latest projects, explore new technologies, and compete in software competitions. Our global community has participated in over 650 online and in-person hackathons. Past competition sponsors include government agencies, universities, corporations, and non-profits.

About Transit Wireless

Transit Wireless has implemented a high quality, highly resilient network that enables secure private networks and public Wi-Fi. Transit Wireless was formed specifically to meet the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (MTA) requirement to provide a shared wireless infrastructure to enable commercial wireless services provided by AT&T, T-Mobile, Sprint and Verizon for New York City Transit customers within the underground subway stations and related opportunities.