NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release
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Registration Now Open For DataFest:ArtQuest
Hackathon To Combine
The Public's Art With The Public's Right To Know

Albuquerque, N.M. – DataFest:ArtQuest – an effort to combine the public's art with the public's right to know in a local Hackathon event spread over two weekends in June – is now accepting individual and team registrations. The event is free, but registration is required.

On Saturday, June 12, DataFest:ArtQuest takes place first at the Albuquerque Convention Center with opening remarks, goals and two workshops. Then the action shifts all across the City of Albuquerque as participants will be asked to capture information about the City's public art, including location of individual sculptures, statues and murals and the GPS coordinates of each item. The participants will be asked to take photos of the art as well. Participants will also be asked to capture the same information about Bernalillo County's public art and the University of New Mexico's public art. A tutorial and a collection point for the data will be announced. This segment begins on June 12 and will continue through the second weekend.

The subsequent Saturday, June 19, DataFest:ArtQuest participants will be asked to gather again at the Albuquerque Convention Center and use the data collected and submitted to create innovations with the end user in mind. Prizes will be awarded for the best creation. Workshops on data and coding will be offered. Refreshments will also be provided.

"A traditional hackathon is an event where programmers, coders and other IT specialists get together for a short period of time to collaborate on a project," Melanie J. Majors, New Mexico Foundation for Open Government, executive director, said. "In this event, we are extending participation beyond those involved in IT, as we know that art raises public consciousness, inspires us and brings people together. Through this public participation project NMFOG hopes to raise awareness of the public's right to know."

She said in a hackathon, participants often develop prototypes of software applications like web or mobile apps. It is also an opportunity to network with other coders, seasoned mentors and like-minded individuals.

"This is an opportunity for those who are not policy geeks or record seekers to learn more about the importance of public data and public records in a fun environment that incorporates an area not often associated with transparency and accountability – public art data," she said.

The City of Albuquerque has partnered with NMFOG on DataFest:ArtQuest. Majors said NMFOG had approached several public agencies about hosting a hackathon and said the City of Albuquerque staff were quick to see the value of the project, suggested involving the arts and DataFest:ArtQuest was born.

"The City is excited to partner in this activity as we know that art can be an effective tool to encourage dialogue and civic engagement," Sherri Brueggemann, Public Art Manager for the City of Albuquerque, said. "We hope to engage the public with capturing images of public art in their neighborhoods along with seeing what kind of exciting program and tools coders might come up with for learning about and enjoying more public art."

The event will be in person and virtual. Individuals are encouraged to join teams and sign up. All Covid-19 safety protocols will be observed in accordance with New Mexico Department of Health Public Health guidelines.

A full schedule of event as well as the registration form is available at http://www.cabq.gov/datafest.

Other organizations involved include Code for Albuquerque, CNM Ingenuity - Deep Dive Coding, Community Geography at UNM, ABQ IGers, AIGA NM, Coffee + Creatives, Cultivating Coders and Yelp.

DataFest:ArtQuest is funded in part by the National Freedom of Information Coalition, dedicated to helping establish, support and empower state Freedom of Information coalitions, including NMFOG, to improve the laws, public policies, and practices of government information dissemination at the state and local levels.

As an advocate for transparency in government, NMFOG's mission is to defend the public's right to know and to educate citizens and government agencies about their rights and responsibilities under New Mexico's open-meetings and open-records laws. NMFOG is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, member-supported organization that serves the open government interests of the general public, the business community, elected officials, journalists and lawyers.

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