

## 2017 Ten Wins for the Wake County Innovation Team

1. **Dedicated Staffing** – We developed job descriptions and hired for several key positions: The Chief Information & Innovation Officer, the Solutions Development Director, Two Innovation Partners and a Data Scientist. All of these positions are new to the County and are primarily focused on county-wide innovation.
2. **Innovation Charter** – We developed an Innovation Charter which outlines our Focus Areas: Advocating for Innovation, Supporting Best Practices, Developing Skills, Helping People Generate Ideas, Supporting New Service Initiatives, Creating Safe Environments for Experimentation and Exploring Disruptive Technologies. Additionally the Charter defines our Guiding Principles and Methods of Work. We will use the content of this charter to help us develop relationships with the departments and establish work projects along the way.
3. **WakeInnovates.com** – We created a website dedicated to our innovation efforts. The website is designed for two-way communication with all interested internal and external organizations and individuals. The site contains information about our innovation projects, solicitations for input, a dynamic innovation-focused blog and more.
4. **Civic Tech Engagement** – The team has established strong ties to the leadership of the local civic tech community and together we identified several areas of focus for civic tech engagement, based on the Board of Commissioners Goals & Objectives. We have identified internal subject matter experts and project champions and the following projects are in the “pitch” stage of development within the civic tech community: Greenways/park app, Resource locator for food insecurity, App for finding appropriate medical facilities and a Minority/Woman-Owned Business portal.
5. **Community Broadband & Digital Literacy** – We established connectwake.com (v1.0) as an online clearinghouse for all information related to broadband and digital literacy services currently available within the County. Version 2.0 (in development now) will include extensive content and partnerships with key organizations within the County that provide digital literacy services such as basic computer skills, internet skills, online job seeking, etc. Additionally, working with the GIS department, we built a municipal Fiber Map that includes all municipal, public school and higher-ed fiber availability within the region in a single online map. We expect the map to be fully populated by late summer. Next phase will be to host moderated forums to identify quick wins of data and connectivity sharing to save money and take advantage of the speed and connectedness of the entire Triangle J region.
6. **CREATEspace** – Collaborate, Research, Experiment, Accomplish, Transform & Engage. This is our one-of-a-kind innovation space. It consists of four components: **Collaboratory**– A dedicated

innovation center, distinct from a specific department, which provides a physical and mental separation from near-term issues and work, in order to encourage and facilitate creativity, collaboration and experimentation. **DiscoTech**– Discover Technology is a hands-on space for employees to familiarize themselves with soon-to-be implemented technologies and/or new and disruptive technologies under testing for implementation. **Thinkubator** – A training area for the development of skills for effective investigation and evaluation of innovative projects as well as ongoing coaching/mentoring to ensure that learning continues on after the coursework. **Lab Rooms** – Dedicated project spaces available for long or short-term project based work.

7. **Innovation Fund** – Through the budget process, we secured a recurring capital fund of \$100,000 dedicated to innovation. This fund will be used primarily for pilot initiatives brought forth through our vetting process, along with training materials and tools related to innovation.
8. **Innovation Training** - Using the Thinkubator, we provide direct small-group cohort training on innovative methodologies such as Design Thinking and Agile project management as well as advanced training on technical innovation tools already in the County, such as Power BI. This training also will include access to ongoing mentoring and cohort communications to help ensure that the lessons “stick” after participants leave the sessions.
9. **Data Science Initiatives** – Although our Data Science position was not filled until March of this year, we have still already made several advances worth noting:
  - **Data Science Platform** – We established a prototype platform that provides a central location and format for subject matter experts to access their data and connect them with other relevant data sets. The platform provides governance, security and consistency around data assets. It also helps us centralize the data tools and encourage collaboration and data sharing amongst departments
  - **Performance Metrics Platform** – In response to a request from the CMO for research on a “dashboard” tool, we have developed a zero-cost prototype visual display dashboard which should serve as an interim solution until such time the county implements a full performance management program
  - **Data Validation of CHNA Index** – We provided analysis of self-reported ailment data added to Community Health Needs Assessment and Vulnerable Populations Index by partnering with Long Range Planning. This data allows us to better validate or invalidate assumptions made while creating these models which used aggregated data and give us better insight using real data.
10. **Implementing Innovations & Disruptive Technologies** – We have identified a potential “portfolio” of areas to explore, but we have already begun work on several initiatives worth noting:
  - **HR Salary Study** – We collaborated with HR to help them reduce their manual data entry in the annual salary survey and improve their analytics. They would spend approximately six

weeks each year entering the response data into their analysis tool. By focusing on the work as data rather than just information, we worked together to develop tools in Excel that, along with a supporting process, allowed them to virtually eliminate the manual data entry and also increase their ability to analyze feedback from benchmark organizations with different parameters and from different points of view. What used to take roughly six weeks now takes about an hour.

- **Citizen Engagement** – The County already regularly uses survey tools to capture feedback from citizens. However, we wanted to improve this data collection via more strategic citizen engagement by providing peer to peer interactions outside of meetings and to be more thorough in collecting this information. We recently partnered with a local company called Cityzen to determine how we could improve the collection and quality of citizen feedback in a variety of ways. By running this experiment with Community Services and with Human Services, along with involvement from Communications, we can learn on a smaller scale with experienced staff to see what the possibilities are and vet a variety of tools to see what might be the best place to start.
- **Mileage Tracker** – This is an example of the importance of conversations over documentation. Environmental Services needed a way to provide non Wake-County vehicle mileage logs to Finance for reimbursement. An Environmental Services staff member was using an Excel spreadsheet completed by each temporary pool inspector, plugging the addresses into Google Maps to determine the shortest route and then printing out and submitting the Google maps to Finance with the reimbursement request. After discussions leading to a meeting with Finance, we found that they are piloting Forms in Motion for mileage tracking/reimbursement and are willing to include ES as part of the pilot. This is a perfect and timely solution for ES, using an existing and supported tool available directly from Finance.
- **Push Notifications** – Push notifications employ the use of smart phones to send (often time-sensitive) data to users through an application that runs in the background. In an effort to experiment with this kind of technology, we partnered with the Animal Center which has a need to notify fosters in urgent situations. Many of the animals under the care of the Animal Center, particularly kittens, require overnight care which we cannot provide in the center. Fosters are currently notified that there is a need through email but they often don't see that until the center is closed. The Animal Center wanted a tool that would allow them to push out notifications that are more obvious. We found a solution that allows them to push out alerts to iPhones, Android phones, and web browsers. Through this experiment we will help solve that need but also learn about how the County can leverage these tools in other ways.
- **Drones** – We are leading efforts to develop a comprehensive use policy for drones across the county including validated uses, ownership, liability coverages, procedures, etc.

- **Website/Intranet Artificial Intelligence Chatbots** – We are currently exploring the use of an internet chatbot service (headquartered in RTP) for integration into the intranet redesign project and eventually WakeGov.com redesign to provide faster and more accurate online customer self-service via artificial intelligence.
- **Mobile App Development Tool Kit** – As the demand for mobile applications are increasing, so is the cost for these apps. Some entrepreneurial companies are solving this problem with applications designed to build applications. DropSource (based in Raleigh) and AppCityLife are two such companies. With these tools, someone with general technology skills can build a mobile application that can be pushed to both Android and Apple stores. These tools may help us to increase the use of niche mobile apps throughout the County, reducing the time and cost to design, deploy, and maintain these apps. We are currently exploring the cost and viability of these tools with possible experiments coming in the future.