

Sheridan Software Developers Place 1st at Google GovDev Challenge in Denver

This past weekend 150 computer software developers descended on Denver to participate in the first GovDev Challenge sponsored by Google. Local business owners, Anne Gunn of Sheridan Programmers Guild and Mark Thoney of Wyolution, LLC teamed up with Tighe Fagan of Gannett Peak Technical Services and Wyolution partner, Jared Kail, of Lander to form Team Code Rangers.

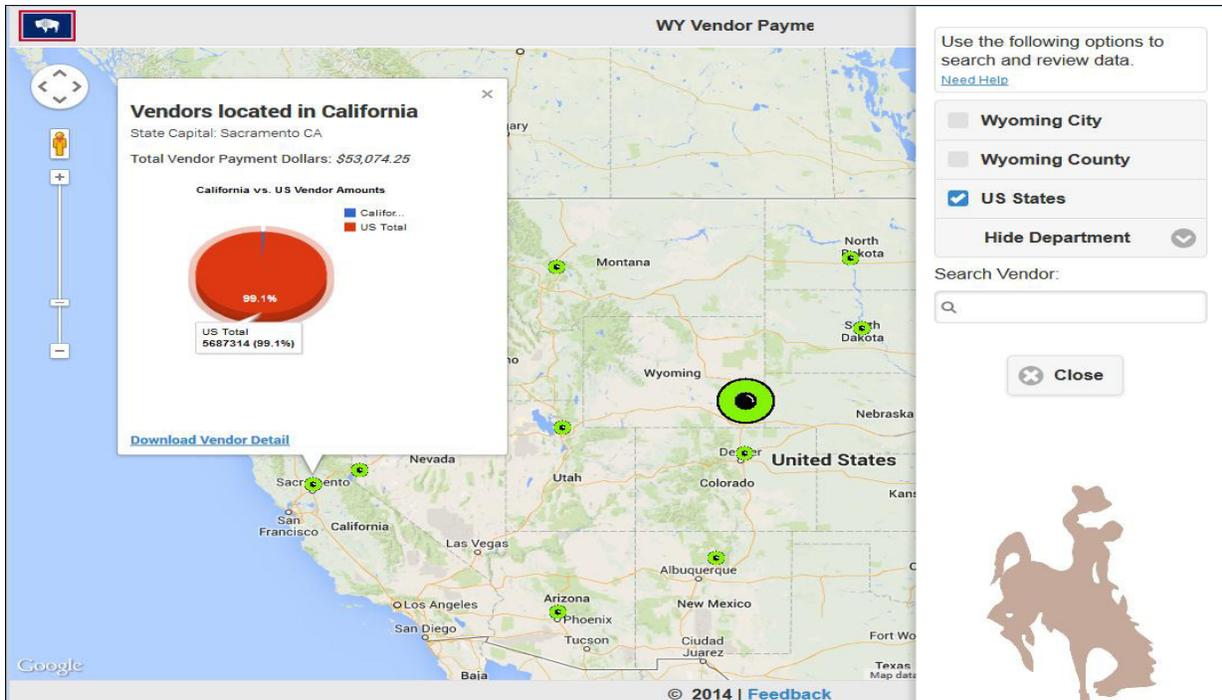
Colorado and Wyoming state governments collaborated with Google in an effort to see how citizens can solve challenges facing the public sector. They hosted the app challenge May 17th and 18th in Denver, Colorado. The GovDev challenge was a 24-hour live coding event providing three different challenge opportunities; Disaster Assistance Center Automation, Disaster Assistance Center Materials Management, and Budget Data Transparency.

Team Code Rangers opted to solve the Wyoming Budget Transparency Challenge. Their task was to develop a simple yet innovative solution for anyone to access publicly available spending data. The solution needed to support multiple platforms, including mobile devices, and reporting capabilities such as spending by product type, timeframe and agency.

Although governmental transparency is vitally important for citizen oversight of how our democratic process works, as the data gets more complex that transparency gets harder to achieve. To solve the transparency challenge the Code Rangers took disparate data sets from the State of Wyoming and other publicly available information, combined it in a database, and presented the data in a visual way using Google Maps, Google Charts and other widely available technologies. The application created is intended to help solve part of the transparency problem by quickly visualizing where state vendor dollars actually get spent.

At first the team aimed to answer the key question: Where, within the state, do the vendor payment dollars go? After the first map was developed, they realized that out-of-state payments could also be mapped which then led to additional questions: Do different departments have different spending patterns? Could users query by Vendor name?

In less than 24 hours the Code Rangers team was not only able to answer all those questions -- for both mobile and desktop users -- but also provide the user a way to download detailed data and an option to leave feedback. In addition, the application plugged in Google Analytics to monitor the features utilized most often. The end result is an application that is useful for analyzing and visualizing a vast amount of data at a high level, while allowing for detailed drill-down information and context-appropriate downloads.



Teams were judged on their application’s ability to solve the challenge, its technical merit, originality, and how well Google’s tools were incorporated into the app. Wyoming was represented by four teams at the competition. The Code Rangers team won first place in the Budget Data Transparency challenge and was awarded a \$5,000 cash prize.

The beta application can be viewed at: govdev.wyolution.com



Front Row: Jared Kail, Mark Thoney Back Row: Anne Gunn, Tighe Fagan