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News, updates, and announcements from Code for Asheville

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**In this edition:**

- Learning About Ourselves by Working on the Website
- New Member Voice
- News from the Network
- Upcoming events
- Free tickets to the Code for America Summit

**At our next Community Night:**

We'll split into two groups. One will continue to work on the new website. The other will dive into the City of Asheville's [Open Data Portal](#) to find interesting data and questions for our April event on developing dashboards and analyses using City data and APIs. Hope to see you there!

**Note:** We include the main article in full so those without internet at home can download the email in advance.

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## Learning About Ourselves by Working on the Website

If you are a Code for Asheville member, you probably don't spend much time hanging out on our website. The site is primarily used by people who don't know us, from the generally curious to potential members or partners. At our February 8th Community Night we spent some time exploring how well our current site meets these visitors' needs.

Let's just say that we didn't need to explore very far to determine that we're doing a very poor job.

So we are fixing it. We started that night and will continue at our [March 8 meeting](#). As we envisioned it, the site will contain five pages:

- **Home Page** - A quick view of who we are and what we do, with clear next steps to learn more, come to a meeting, or sign up for the newsletter.
- **What We Do** - Three sections present descriptions and examples for the primary types of activity we engage in:
  - [Civic Technology](#) - Projects that create new capabilities in our community, like Sunshine Request, the Reentry Hub, or the Beloved Computer Lab.
  - [Data for Policy Advocacy](#) - Projects that help the community use data to more effectively advocate for positive change, such as the work on racial disparities in traffic stops or homeless interactions with law enforcement.
  - [Bringing People Together](#) - Events and activities that forge new connections within our communities, such as ReRoute AVL, Open Data Day and our collaboration with UniteWNC.
- **Who We Are** - A brief introduction to the people who participate in Code for Asheville. This page will also host brief video clips of members from our StoryTell project.
- **Blog** - The blog will present the main article from each edition of the newsletter, with a link to the full version.
- **About Us** - A general information page with links to Code for America, our Meetup site, and third-party articles about Code for Asheville.

Our work at our Community Night benefited tremendously from having both long-time participants and first-timers. In the end, the work turned out to be more than just fixing a broken website. It actually became a process of together discovering who we are. As brigade captain Eric Jackson commented: "I learned things about Code for Asheville that hadn't occurred to me before, like our role in bringing people together. It's true, but nobody ever quite named it before. That was exciting."

Those interested will continue working on the site at our [March 8 meetup](#).

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## New Member Voice

We asked one of our newest members, **Alyx Perry**, two questions about our November 8th meeting: "What was the best part of the meeting?" and "What would you like to see more of?" Her answers - ***Best part of the meeting: (a) working on a project and (b) the people. Want more of: skill share.*** Thank you, Alyx, and welcome! Anybody else want to answer the questions? What was the best part of a Code for Asheville meeting? What would you like to see more of? Send your answers to [Jim March](#).

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## News from the Network

### The State of Data in Newsrooms: Findings & Recommendations

An interesting [report](#) compiled for the [UNC Reese News Lab](#) by [Melody Kramer](#) based on interviews with journalists and civic hackers. While focused on media, one of the themes that emerged was the value of collaboration between civic hackers and journalists.

## New Civic Tech Chat Podcast

[Civic Tech Chat](#) is a new monthly podcast covering the civic technology movement.

## Helping Residents Navigate the Municipal Courts Maze

Open Data STL and the Civic Tech and Data Collaborative built [YourSTLCourts.com](#) to help residents understand the over 80 municipal courts there. [Read how they designed, built, and tested it.](#)

Want more civic tech news? Subscribe to [This Week in Civic Tech](#).

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## Upcoming events

### 3/8 Monthly Community Meetup

Our next Community Night will be on Thursday, March 8, 2018 at 5:30pm, at the Stephens-Lee Recreation Center. RSVP on [meetup](#) or just show up.

We'll split into two groups. One will continue to work on the new website. The other will dive into the City of Asheville's [Open Data Portal](#) to find interesting data and questions for our April event on developing dashboards and analyses using city data and APIs.

*Community nights occur on the second Thursday of each month at Stephens-Lee Recreation Center.*

### 3/20 Brigade Planning Meeting

Our next regular planning meeting will take place on Tuesday, March 20 at 5:30pm at the Battery Park Book Exchange. RSVP [here](#) or just stop by. You can find the agenda and notes from previous meetings [here](#).

### 2018 Code for America Summit - May 30 - June 1

Registration is now open for the seventh annual [Code for America Summit](#) and we have two pay-what-you-can tickets available! If you've never been, the Summit is an opportunity not to be missed, bringing together more than 1,200 public servants, civic technologists, brigade members, entrepreneurs and technology companies to share what's working and what's not when it comes to government getting the full benefit of technology for better services, better outcomes and better value for money. This year's event will take place May 30th - June 1st in Oakland, CA.

Code for Asheville gets 2 free tickets to the event - is one of them for you? Contact [Eric Jackson](#) if you are even a little bit interested.

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## Have a Story to Share?

We'd love to have your contribution. You can write something up about a Code for Asheville event or share something else going on in the civic tech world. Email us at [code4asheville@gmail.com](mailto:code4asheville@gmail.com).

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Join the CfA Discussion on Slack

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