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## **2018 Best of Texas Awards Recognize Innovative Texas Public-Sector Agencies**

**Sacramento, CA – May 31, 2018** – The Texas State Guard J6, Texas A&M’s Division of IT and the City of El Paso were among the agencies honored at the [2018 Best of Texas Awards](#) presented by the Center for Digital Government at the annual Texas Digital Government Summit this week in Austin.

“Governmental and educational leaders in Texas are leveraging technology to improve cybersecurity, enhance citizen service and advance emergency response, among many other things,” said Teri Takai, executive director, Center for Digital Government. “Congratulations to this year’s Best of Texas winners for the vital role they are playing in advancing information technology in Texas.”

Highlights from the [2018 Best of Texas winners](#) include:

- **Texas A&M’s Division of IT** was recognized for their creation of a web game in which players tracked a hacker known as “Bad Bull” across campus by answering cybersecurity questions and riddles about Texas A&M traditions. Players enabled location services on their devices and followed clues. The game cleverly used geolocation for an interactive experience, while explaining the dangers of enabling location services and the importance of cybersecurity.
- The **City of El Paso** was honored for implementing “Ask Laura”, a customer service chatbot avatar with both audible and text messaging on screen and the ability to continue service from the side of the screen. The voice and look are customizable, and the software provides analytics and reporting. Used on four departmental websites so far, ‘Ask Laura’ is meeting the city’s efforts to deliver an outstanding customer service experience to constituents.
- The **Texas State Guard J6** was recognized for its Readiness Management System (RMS), which works with a mobile app to alert command about force readiness and precise location. The system was used during Hurricane Harvey. Built and maintained by a volunteer Texas State Guard force, RMS has already saved Texas taxpayers over \$4 million.

The Best of Texas Awards program recognizes public-sector professionals and local government organizations for their dedication and contributions to advancing information

technology in Texas. Winners are selected based on a number of criteria, including collaboration among agencies, innovative use of technology, economic benefits and improving public services and business processes. During the reception, 11 Outstanding IT Service and Support Awards were also presented to those dedicated to Texas public service.

## **2018 Award Recipients:**

### **Demonstrated Excellence in Project Management**

- Jeff Kersey, Sr. IT Tech Analyst, City of Fort Worth

### **Best Application Serving an Agency's Business Needs**

- Hurricane Harvey: Mobile Apps for Response & Recovery, Harris County
- Texas State Guard J6 - Readiness Management System, Texas Military Department

### **Best Application Serving the Public**

- Ask Laura - Virtual Information Officer, City of El Paso
- Texas Reality Check, Texas Workforce Commission

### **Best IT Collaboration Among Organizations**

- eLICENSING System, Texas Department of Motor Vehicles
- Super Bowl LI: New Standard in Public Safety Collaboration, Harris County

### **Most Innovative Use of Social Media/Citizen Engagement**

- Inland Fisheries Texas ShareLunker Mobile App, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

### **Best Business Analysis/Data Analytics Project**

- Texas Labor Analysis, Texas Workforce Commission

### **Best Mobile/Wireless Project**

- Mobile Electronic Traffic Citation System, Bell County
- Keep Tradition Secure, Texas A&M Division of IT

## **ABOUT THE CENTER FOR DIGITAL GOVERNMENT**

[The Center for Digital Government](#) is a national research and advisory institute focused on technology policy and best practices in state and local government. The Center provides public- and private-sector leaders with decision support and actionable insight to help drive 21<sup>st</sup> century government. The Center is a division of [e.Republic](#), the nation's only media and research company focused exclusively on state and local government and education.

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