CHALLENGE #1

Summary
Create a better way to inform central Ohio residents about closings, cancellations or postponements prompted by severe weather or other causes.

Challenge:
When severe weather hits central Ohio, citizens typically go online to the website of local news organizations to find out about closings and cancellations. This information typically is gathered from organizations or groups such as schools, churches, government offices, civic organizations, clubs, etc. They fill out and submit an online form to the news organization noting whether an office has been closed or whether an event has been cancelled or postponed. Once the form is submitted, the information is automatically captured in a database and can immediately be accessed by readers who check the news organization's website.

Your challenge is submitted by the Media Network of Central Ohio. You need to come up with an improved system that will provide consumers with this information on all platforms – desktop, mobile website, mobile app and tablet website.

Deliverables:

- A summary of the problem within its context
  In order to ensure your solution is truly innovative, you need to investigate the problem. Are there any existing similar technological approaches to what you propose? If so, how does your solution try to recreate, improve on or differentiate itself from a previously successful approach? What observations, studies, industry research, or communication best practices support your approach to the problem?

- A viable solution:
  Your solution should address both the ease and speed of capturing information about closings and cancellations, as well as how this information will be communicated to various audiences.

  For example, it should be possible to report closings and cancellations using the full range of digital devices (everything from a smartphone to a desktop). And whatever method is used, your solution should address how to quickly verify that this information is accurate.

  At the same time, your solution might include ways to quickly “push” this information to members of your audience across multiple platforms, so they don't necessarily need to go to a website to check.
- **A workable business model**
  Your proposed solution should address the cost of creating, implementing and maintaining this upgraded system. Ideally, your solution should be easy for the news organization to manage.

- **A strategy for reaching diverse audiences**
  Special attention should be paid to innovative solutions that address underserved and underrepresented audiences.

**Resources:**
These links may help get you started:

http://www.newarkadvocate.com/viewint/article/99999999/UPDATES02/100217011/Licking-County-cancellations-business-event-church


In addition, you may benefit from checking a variety of news organizations, government offices, schools and organizations to learn how they communicate with the public about closings and cancellations.