

# BizFed Bounce Back



*BizFed members share stories of resilience.*

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*In the face of COVID19, BizFed members bounce back with perseverance, creativity and resourcefulness.*

## **KERN TAX SEES DISRUPTION AS OPPORTUNITY**

No one knows what business as usual will look for many businesses in a post-COVID-19 world, but according to the Kern County Taxpayers Association, the outbreak could lead to opportunities for positive change in the way businesses operate.

KernTax is always pushing its diverse coalition of members--which includes members in energy, agriculture and real estate, as well as leaders in education--to test boundaries and to change for the better, according to Michael Turnipseed, its executive director.

"We're disciples of disruption," Turnipseed said. "We're trying to change the status quo and always pushing boundaries."

### **Telecommuting Here To Stay?**

One of the biggest changes will be conducting business in a remote setting, such as telecommuting for employees and interacting with customers in a digital environment.

Many employees have now had a taste of telecommuting, which can help improve a work/life balance, and many might not be so eager to go back into an office five days a week. Meanwhile, employers have now had a trial run by which to measure telecommuting's strengths and weaknesses in real time.

"Some people are used to working from home and might not want to go back every day," Turnipseed said. "They can take breaks, go for runs and still get their work done. It drove me crazy, but I've always been out and about."

### **Digital Sales**

Many KernTax members have had little COVID-related disruptions. Farmers kept farming, and oil fields kept operating--though oil has had other issues tied to reduced demand and a global price war--and fruit and vegetable packers were already accustomed to using masks and gloves. But there was possibly a no better example of businesses having to adapt than Realtors, who have a business model based on in-person interactions but have had to navigate pandemic safety precautions.

"It's more visual now," Turnipseed said. "You don't have open houses in person anymore. You film a video and put it online. It increases some of the costs, but you find potential customers are really serious and have done a lot of research."

### **Split Roll**

Going forward, one of the most significant issues for the rest of the year at KernTax will be the Prop 13 split roll measure, which recently qualified for the November ballot. His proposition, if passed, would lead to significant in-



*Michael Turnipseed - Executive Director, Kern County Taxpayers Association.*

creases to commercial property taxes under the guise of helping schools, which is a sleight of hand, according to many critics.

"Schools really aren't going to benefit," Turnipseed said. "If they get a bump in local property tax revenue, their apportionment of state funds will go down from there. Plus, most schools spend 85 to 90 percent on payroll--there's little left over for the classroom."



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