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## The Dallas Morning News

OPINION

# Small businesses making small adjustments can stem the tide of economic downturn

Now is time for creative entrepreneurship; not for conducting business as usual, nor for waiting on a government check



Fargo's Pit BBQ in Bryan is one many businesses finding creative ways to adjust to the economic crisis caused by coronavirus.



By Dallas Morning News Editorial

1:00 AM on Apr 1, 2020

As the coronavirus public health crisis continues to spread, it's also creating an economic crisis that will impact the world. Last week, Congress approved a stimulus package that will provide some much needed help for American businesses. But a government check won't be enough. Now is the time for businesses great and small to think creatively about how to adjust to a fluid market and keep the economy moving.

Last week, a few examples from Bryan-College Station gave us hope. The effects of shelter-in-place and social distancing are pronounced in college towns where much of the local economy depends on students spending. Across College Station, bars and shops sit empty. But the owners of those shops aren't content to wait.

David Fox, owner of the Blue Baker, has created a new product he calls "baker bonds" which are gift cards with a twist: customers can redeem any unused balance on a card with "interest," which Fox will pay in the form of cookies.

Across town in Bryan, Fargo's Pit BBQ is installing a drive-through window and opening an online store to sell its barbecue sauce.

Closer to home, and closer to the crisis, Unique Software Development in Dallas and Leather Sofa Company in Lewisville have

shifted operations to making medical supplies.

None of this is ideal. Bakers open bakeries because they're good at baking, not at creative financing. What's more, adjustments like these won't save all businesses. At best, they might stem the tide. But if Fargo's Pit BBQ can spin up an online store shipping to stay-at-home pit bosses across the nation, that might slow the company's descent while we wait for the crisis to abate and the economy to rebound.

This isn't a time for businesses to flaunt the recommendations of public health experts to shelter in place. But it's also not the time for entrepreneurs to sit on their haunches and wait for a government bailout. Instead, small businesses should make what creative adjustments they can in crisis, to find ways to work behind a keyboard instead of behind a counter, and to keep companies solvent. They will still need help from government and from all of us who can give them business from a safe distance.

But we celebrate the creativity of business owners in our state, and we expect to see a lot more stories like these in weeks to come.

This editorial was written by the editorial board and serves as the voice and opinion of The Dallas Morning News.

