



Office of Civil Rights

## Got Lemons, Make Lemonade

*In conjunction with National Hispanic-Latino Heritage Month, Caltrans is spotlighting Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE): Bayside Engineering Construction Inc. This is part of a series of articles showcasing Caltrans' DBE diversity.*

One of the biggest motivators for some Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) is their disadvantage.

Luis Rivero, owner of Bayside Engineering Construction Inc. (Bayside), was born in Venezuela. His family moved to Washington in 1980 and ran a Mexican restaurant for 18 years. During his senior year of high school, Rivero earned an engineering scholarship from the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers. Then, Rivero earned his Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering and master's in environmental engineering at Washington State University.



In 2000, Rivero moved to San Diego, where he started managing projects for the Department of Defense, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Department of Energy. But Rivero wanted to start his own engineering consulting firm. After several years of planning and development, Bayside launched in May of 2018.

Rivero became a licensed contractor and was accepted in the Small Business Administration's (SBA) 8(a) Business Development Program. He certified Bayside as a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise, Minority Business Enterprise and Small Business.

Rivero said he was surprised at how many resources were available to entrepreneurs. "I used every tool available," he said.

Caltrans San Diego district Business Services Manager gave him information about Caltrans bidding opportunities and its CalMentor program. Bayside became a subcontractor on a variety of construction, natural resources, and abatement projects.

When the COVID-19 pandemic came, Rivero was forced to think outside the box. He sought job opportunities nationwide. The firm has since found a niche in COVID-19 disinfection.

Rivero developed Bayside's health and safety training regime following the latest Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Occupational Safety and Health Administration guidance for COVID-19 Positive Facility Cleaning and Disinfection.

"We do it all by the book," Rivero said. "Our crews know they are accountable for safety – not only for themselves, but for others, as well."

Bayside has executed nearly 200 task orders, both as a prime and as a subcontractor, and they have a zero-incident safety record.

They have disinfected Caltrans buildings and naval facilities.

"My goal was to come up with new ways to keep our crew working during this new normal," he said.

And he has.

Now Rivero has come full circle. The agency that awarded him a scholarship in high school, the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers, just elected him vice president of Corporate Affairs for the San Diego Chapter.

"I'm proud of my heritage and I try to do everything I can to help my community succeed," Rivero said.

*To get certified as a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise visit [Caltrans' Website](#).*