

## Cook Takes To Road With Digital Plan

*Sunrise Tortillas maps out food truck strategy using online orders.*

Starting a restaurant can be expensive, but so can starting a food truck, where by some estimates costs can run from \$28,000 up to \$114,000.

To avoid the expense and uncertainty of a traditional food truck, one local entrepreneur has started what she calls a "virtual food truck" specializing in breakfast burritos, using \$10,000 of her own money.

"I am a complete efficiency and process geek," said Emmy Tellez, 48, who started Sunrise Tortillas in August. "I've eliminated all the risks of wasting food."

Rather than hanging out on the street not knowing whether she'll sell everything she's made, Tellez has customers place orders through her website, SunriseTortilla.com, by 5 p.m. the day before they want them. She begins preparing the burritos at 3 a.m. at a commercial kitchen with two friends and then delivers them starting at 6 a.m. weekdays and 8 a.m. Saturdays at prearranged stops in her SUV.

Tellez said she doesn't know of any other food trucks operating in such a way and the method is certainly



**Packed Up:** Sunrise Tortillas founder Emmy Tellez handles food truck orders. RINGO H.W. CHULABU

different than the typical trucks that have filled L.A. streets in recent years. The L.A. food truck scene has grown from a trendy niche industry to a mainstream business model, with an estimated 3,200 operating in Los Angeles County as of 2014.

Tellez said she has been selling about 300 to 500 burritos a week at \$6.75 to

\$7.50 each and estimates she'll do \$150,000 in sales next year.

"I'm going for the slow dime on this," she said.

"The growth is much slower probably but the expenses are very manageable."

Tellez came up with her concept as a way to earn a living while spending more time with her 16-year-old daughter. Before moving

to Los Angeles, she owned a restaurant outside of Washington, D.C., where she tested out the burritos as a one-off.

Eventually, Tellez wants to add a brick-and-mortar location serving breakfast and lunch. She hopes the food truck will help her identify the best area as well as attract a partner or investor.

— Caroline Anderson

## Game Targets New Type Of Programmers

*CodeSpark's Foes aims to speak to young kids on coding language.*

In a world where computer skills are becoming increasingly important, Grant Hosford feels it's never too early to teach children how to program — even before they can read.

To that end, Hos-

ford co-founded CodeSpark in December 2014 to teach children as young as 4 the concepts of computer programming with the help of a word-free video game called Foes, in which kids solve puzzles and eventually design their own video games. The game uses images in lieu of traditional coding language and players can share their creations with other users.



**Hosford**

More than 5 million children in 201 countries have played the game, and its success, Hosford said, can be attributed to being wordless.

"Pre-readers can play and anyone who speaks any language can play," he said.

Hosford came up with the idea for CodeSpark when he couldn't find a suitable source to teach coding to his daughter, who was 6 at the

time. The subscription app costs \$7.99 a month but is free for education nonprofits, libraries, and schools.

In late September, the Pasadena company raised \$4.1 million in a second round of seed funding from some of its original investors, **Kapor Capital**, **NewGen Capital**, and **Idealab**, which helped raise \$1.35 million last year, as well as newcomers **Felton Group**, **PGA Venture Partners**, and some private investors.

— Natalie Zhang

## Presidential Endorsement

Dr. Mark Humayun, professor of ophthalmology, biomedical engineering, and cell and neurobiology at USC, received an unexpected surprise from President Barack Obama when he was awarded the National Medal of Technology and Innovation last year.

"These sorts of awards, I've never really kept as something to look to or get," he said. "I do (the work) for completely different reasons, (but) when it happens it's a great thing."

Humayun, who declined to give his age, co-invented a series of retina implants called Argus that help restore sight to the blind — technology he has worked on for 30 years.

He said meeting Obama was much easier than he expected, especially since he was told a list of things not to do for security reasons, such as touching the president.

"He's so friendly, the first thing he does is give you a big handshake," Humayun said. "He's just very cordial and warm, but the Secret Service was obviously very much alert."

### Checklist

Turning 50 is a major milestone for anyone, but for **Ann Marie Mortimer**, managing partner at the L.A. office of law firm **Hunton & Williams**, her birthday this year has been tinged with solemn reflection. Mortimer's mother died in January, and it encouraged the downtown attorney to refocus on things she's



**Humayun with Obama**

always wanted to do.

"What do I want to do to mark with intentionality this important benchmark year in my life?" she recalled. "Are the lives we're living the lives we want?"

So Mortimer assembled a "50 for 50" list, detailing the 50 feats she wanted to

accomplish by the end of her 50th year. Some of the items are relatively minor, such as eating at **Roscoe's House**

of **Chicken and Waffles** for the first time or finding the best chili-cheese fries in Los Angeles, which Mortimer concluded were at the **Hat** in Pasadena or **Tomboy's** in Manhattan Beach.

"You will find many of my endeavors are food related," she said, laughing.

Others items on Mortimer's to-do list require a little planning, such as visiting

Dubai (check), staying at an ice hotel (check), and attending the Kentucky Derby (check, plus wearing "the biggest hat" she could find).

She's been keeping track of all her adventures with photos and in a journal, and said she's still seeking suggestions for the best doughnut in Los Angeles.



**Mortimer**

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