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Mahena Torres runs her tax preparation and bookkeeping business out of her home in Gonzales.

# Tax preparer fills need

*Torres stays busy with notary, bookkeeping services as well*

By **VICTOR CALDERON**  
The Salinas Californian

Now that tax season has come and gone, Mahena Torres keeps busy by offering notary public and bookkeeping services for businesses out of her home in Gonzales.

But the real rush for Torres has come between January and April 15 for each of the past two years as she's operated Mahena's Tax Service for individual and small-business clients.

It's a service that's much need-

ed in Gonzales, she said.

"We have a necessity here in this city for tax preparers and that is where I come in," Torres said.

The number of clients Torres and her son Daniel, 20, helped file taxes doubled this year over the previous year. They work with mostly Spanish-speaking farm workers and older residents. Sixty percent of clients with tax returns are individuals and 40 percent are small-business owners. About half of her clients come from Gonzales and the other half makes the drive down from Salinas, she said.

The busiest time for Torres is the last month before income taxes must be filed, roughly from March 20 to April 16 each year, she said.

"Because of all the paperwork involved, a lot of people wait," she said. "If they owe

## **MAHENA'S TAX SERVICE**

- n **BUSINESS:** Tax preparation service.
- n **ESTABLISHED:** February 2005.
- n **EMPLOYEES:** 2
- n **ORGANIZATION:** Family-run business.
- n **LOCATION:** 1014 Zinfandel Drive, Gonzales.
- n **INFORMATION:** 578-6004.

money, they wait until the last possible minute."

Business hours for Maehna's Tax Service are flexible and are mostly after regular business hours.

"I make it easy for taxpayers to come by in the afternoon so they don't have to miss work," she said.

Torres is a single mother of four who plans to open a year-round office in Gonzales in the near future. She's in the

process of applying for a real estate license and maintains a day job as a bookkeeper for the United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 1096 in Salinas.

She's called Gonzales home for 15 years.

"I feel secure and safe here," Torres said. "To raise a family, Gonzales is a great town."

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