The introduction of the Opportunity Zones Transparency, Extension and Improvement Act in both houses of Congress last week brought attention to the opportunity zones (OZ) incentive. In this week's episode of Tax Credit Tuesday, Michael Novogradac, CPA, and Novogradac partner Brent Parker, CPA, discuss the legislation and preview next week's Novogradac 2022 Spring Opportunity Zones Conference in Long Beach, California. They discuss the provisions of the bill and share what experts will provide insight at the conference. They also discuss the preconference workshops and highlights of the agenda, as well as a look at the Novogradac opportunity zones investment report. The discussion also includes how businesses can benefit from being part of the conference and a crucial upcoming deadline for qualified opportunity funds.

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Transcript

[00:00:10] **Michael J. Novogradac, CPA:** Hello, I'm Michael Novogradac. And this is Tax Credit Tuesday. This is April 12th, 2022, podcast.

The topic of this week's podcast is opportunity zones, but before I start, please let me take a point of personal privilege and share information about a recent devastating loss for me and my family. This podcast, as you know, has been on hiatus since March 8, 2022. You may not know why. The cause of the hiatus is that my wife of nearly 28 years passed away last month. Barbara died after a formidable, three-year battle with cancer. I will share a link to her obituary on Twitter, which evidences what an incredible life she had and what a wonderful legacy she leaves. My family and I are doing as well as can be expected, given our loss, and I do appreciate all the support and condolences my family and I have received during this difficult time. We are planning a celebration of Barbara's life for the end of June in Northern California. My wife, Barbara, was a big believer in the power of gratitude, particularly in difficult times. So in her honor, let me say thank you for granting me this point of personal privilege at the beginning of the podcast.

Now we move back to our regularly scheduled programming.

The opportunity zones incentive continues to drive billions of dollars of investment into low-income communities across America. And last week we saw a significant event as many work to extend and improve this community development incentive. The significant event was the introduction, in both the Senate and the House, of bipartisan opportunities zones legislation that would modify, enhance and extend the opportunity zones incentive. To add to this significant legislative event, next week, we at Novogradac are going to host our annual spring opportunities zones conference in Long Beach, California.

The main conference is next Thursday and Friday. That's April 21 and 22. I say main conference because we do have, on Wednesday, a couple of very popular workshops. In today's podcast, we're going to provide an overview of the key provisions of the recently introduced bipartisan opportunity zones legislation and, at our conference next week, we'll provide a much more in-depth look at the legislation and perhaps more importantly, assess the likelihood and potential timing of passage. Today's podcast will also preview the many other learning and networking opportunities at next week's conference.

Our co-hosts are Capstone. Capstone is an opportunity fund investment management team. Our other co-host is JTC Americas, a management services company with extensive experience administering opportunity funds. There is still time to register for the conference and I will provide a link to do so. The conference is both in person and it's available via livestream. And if you plan to participate via livestream, please be sure to register in advance of the event to obtain a discounted rate. Even if you plan to watch the event afterward, due to potential scheduling conflicts that you have right now, please register now so you'll have a lower rate. If you wait to register until after the conference, the rate goes up.

Joining us for today's podcast is Brent Parker. Brent is a partner of mine from our Long Beach, California, office and chairs next week's 2022 spring opportunity zones conference. Brent, as most likely you recognize his name, has previously been a guest on the podcast and he has expertise that cuts across many aspects of community development tax incentives and he's particularly expert in opportunity zones. We're very glad to have him here as a guest today to discuss this legislation and next week's conference.

Now as I noted earlier, Brent and I are going to talk about the provisions of the opportunity zones legislation and what that can mean for stakeholders. And then we'll turn our attention to the conference, but we also have a bonus discussion. Brent is going to discuss briefly an upcoming June 30 deadline that all opportunity funds and businesses should be aware of. Now, if you're an investor in or a manager of a qualified opportunity fund; if you're a business in, or you're considering moving to an opportunity zone; or you help consult and advise those investing or operating in an opportunity zone, then today's podcast is for you. There's a lot to discuss. So if you're ready, let's get started.

So Brent, welcome back to Tax Credit Tuesday.

[00:04:43] **Brent Parker, CPA:** Thanks, Mike. Great to be back.

Overview of Opportunity Zones Transparency, Extension and Improvement Act

[00:04:47] **Michael J. Novogradac, CPA:** We have a lot to discuss about the upcoming conference, but I do want to start with the opportunity zones legislation that was introduced last week. It had been in the works for many, many, many months, so it was great to see it finally get introduced. Now the legislation includes provisions to extend the opportunity zones incentive, to establish reporting requirements, as well as to phase out certain higher-income zones. If you could share some more specifics about the legislation and discuss briefly what it means for opportunity zones. There's a lot here to unpack and as I mentioned earlier, we'll go into this in much more detail at the conference, but wanted you to give a brief overview of the legislation.

[00:05:32] **Brent Parker, CPA:** Thanks, Mike. As a bipartisan, bicameral effort, the Opportunity Zones Transparency, Extension, Improvement Act was introduced in the Senate on Thursday by five senators and in the House by five representatives representing both sides of the aisle. The proposed legislation is designed to impact the incentive in really five key ways, the first being early sunset of opportunity zones that are not impoverished, that being opportunity zones with 130% of the median family income over the national family income. That sort of excludes certain tracks, such as those with a

30% poverty rate index or more, and certain Brownfield tracks. Second is that the opportunity zone incentive is being extended to investors, or it's proposed to be extended, through the end of 2028, to sort of facilitate continued investment and lower the requirement for investors to receive the additional 5% step-up from seven to six years. So that means that investors who would make their qualified investments into a qualified opportunity fund by the end of 2022 would potentially be allowed a full 15% basis step-up under the proposed legislation. So those are a couple of the exciting provisions.

There's also the proposed legislation is designed to reinstate and expand reporting requirements that were included in the 2017 Investing in Opportunities Act and also allow for funds to be organized as fund of funds, to invest in other funds, which would allow sort of smaller projects to receive funding, obviously subject to certain limitations. Finally to create a $1 billion state and community fund to provide grants to enable states to drive private and public capital to underserved business and communities via wide range of uses.

So we'll be, like you said, Mike, we'll be unpacking and analyzing the information included in the sort of 43-page proposed legislation during our upcoming conference was going to be really excited with some key sort of stakeholders and members that have been driving this legislation.

[00:07:32] **Michael J. Novogradac, CPA:** Great, thank you for that overview. And as you noted, we will discuss this in more detail at the conference next week. We do have representatives from congressional offices, and we have Catherine Lyons from the Economic Innovation Group and others to discuss the history of this legislation, what it's intended to do and go into more of the details.

I will note that with respect to the high-income tracts, the Opportunity Zones Working Group is working to identify what tracts, current opportunity zones, are at risk of being phased out if this legislation is induced, as well as I would note that governors would have the opportunity to replace those tracts with an area that was otherwise eligible, but because it just ended up not getting selected. You might end up being able to get added in when and if this legislation is passed. Then I would also note that this extension legislation obviously would bring back some of the basis step-ups that have since expired. So that in addition to extending the period of time for investors to invest, it would sort of resurrect some of the additional benefits that have now expired with respect to opportunity zones. But more about that in a moment.

Now, as you know, one of the sponsors of the bill, really the lead sponsor if I dare say, is Sen. Tim Scott of South Carolina. He was a key supporter of the legislation that created the opportunity zones incentive and really the central reason why it was ever enacted because it was enacted in legislation that had bipartisan, bicameral support when it was initially introduced the first few congresses. But ultimately it was enacted as part of Republican-only legislation and Sen. Scott was the key advocate for getting opportunity zones in that Republican-only legislation. And Sen. Scott, we're happy to announce, is set to speak at the conference and provide a keynote address and share additional insights for attendees about this recently introduced bill.

That obviously is reason enough to attend our conference, but there are a lot of other things happening over those two days, the Thursday and Friday, as well as the Wednesday. So before we get into the specifics of the various sessions and the rest, Brent, maybe you could, from your perspective as conference chair, discuss some of the key highlights.

Highlights of Novogradac 2022 Spring Opportunity Zones Conference

[00:09:51] **Brent Parker, CPA:** Sure. So, of course, the conference is a great chance to sort of network with a wide variety of OZ stakeholders and get up to speed on the basics as well as sort of latest developments on the incentive through a wide range of educational sessions. One thing that I think that I really want to start keying on are the preconference workshops. So the conference panels themselves are being held next Thursday and Friday, April 21 and 22, but I really urge you not to miss out on the wealth of knowledge and information for our preconference workshops.

So those workshops I want to talk about first are held in-person or online on Wednesday, April 20, and consists of a couple of different sessions. No. 1, there's an OZ Basics workshop from 9 to 1 and that's designed to teach fundamentals of the incentive. A solid primer for some of the more complex topics and intricacies that are going to be discussed on the panels. It effectively allows sort of attendees to learn how to talk shop. This workshop is great for companies that are looking to train employees, those that are new to the incentive or just want a refresher course.

And then the panel, and I myself am also going to be involved in both these panels, but the second panel I'm co-leading, and that's Beyond the Basics workshop and it's from 2 to 5, super exciting. We're going to discuss all types of complex issues, scenarios and transactions, really getting into things that I think are not discussed in a lot of conferences. So very excited about that: related-party issues, circular cash, step transaction topics, structuring issues. We even get into tenant-in-common issues, things like that and so a lot of obstacles there that people can learn about and so, more than just explaining the issues out there and teaching attendees how to navigate the often complicated OZ landscape, these panels give the audience a chance to ask industry-leading experts including Marc Schultz from Snell & Wilmer and Judd Larson from Kutak Rock about their own issues and questions. So you're getting a piece of all of our time so that we can sort of help you navigate some of the issues that you're involved in as well.

[00:11:52] **Michael J. Novogradac, CPA:** I agree with you, Brent. And I do encourage listeners to register for both the conference and the workshops and as I noted earlier, I will share the link in today's show notes to register for the workshops and the conference. You've obviously now shared information about the preconference workshops, which are really engaging. Now, if you could share a bit about the sessions during the conference and what attendees should expect.

[00:12:11] **Brent Parker, CPA:** Sure. So obviously the one thing you don't want to miss is the Washington Report. That's definitely, in my opinion, the most exciting panel, but they're all very exciting. It includes, basically your thought on the state of the opportunities on incentive and where it's headed and some fantastic speakers. We've got five panelists, outside of obviously your moderator is Mike. So, starting with, you have Reid Thomas, chief revenue officer and managing director of JTC Americas, one of the biggest fund administrators out there. I think it's going to be great to be able to hear from him what's happening. You have Shay Hawkins, co-founder and CEO of Opportunity Funds Association. That name should be familiar to if you've been in this incentive longer than a month. So we're very excited to hear from Mr. Hawkins. We also have Catherine Lyons, director of policy and coalitions for the Economic Innovation Group. So super excited, obviously, EIG is one of the primary leaders in this and from the very beginning. We have Adam Farris, senior policy adviser for tax and trade for Sen. Tim Scott, so of course, Tim Scott being an author of the proposed legislation, it's going to be fantastic to be able to hear Mr. Farris' thoughts on the proposal legislation, and finally, last but not least, Praveen Ayyagari, tax counsel, House Ways and Means Committee Select Revenue Measures Subcommittee. You're going to be able to hear from somebody that has their ear to the stone. I'm going to be very excited to hear from each of these individuals and be able to get an insight into what's happening in the incentive.

[00:13:37] **Michael J. Novogradac, CPA:** We'll definitely during the course of that session be focused on more the details of the legislation. A little bit about how some of the details came to be, as well as, and perhaps more importantly, what the timing and likely to passage is. Because that's what matters the most. It's one thing to introduce legislation, but it doesn't have any impact until and unless it is enacted, so I'm looking forward to that session as well. And I'm moderating it.

Highlights of Novogradac Opportunity Zones Investment Report

I also wanted to add something else here and we did publish a report at the end of the year or a report about the end of the year. We published the report earlier this year and the report dealt with the amount of investment that had been raised through the end of last year. Of the qualified opportunity funds that Novogradac's tracking, by our measure, there was a $24 billion with a B investment in opportunity zones by the end of December. And I should even clarify that a little bit more: $24 billion in equity raised, cash invested in opportunity funds by the end of December. As I said in the past, and I'll repeat it here, the actual total investment in all opportunity funds through the end of last year is certainly much higher than that. We have a handful of funds that we're tracking and they're basically going to be those funds that are raising money from third-party investors. So those are the ones that we're tracking, but we have been tracking those funds or at least been tracking funds since 2019. And obviously, every reporting cycle we have additional funds to report on, but we've been tracking since 2019, so our figures do provide a really interesting over-the-years or through-the-years comparison of equity raised. Now during the Washington Report session at the conference, I will be sharing an update of those amounts. So we've publicly released the $24 billion through the end of last year and at the conference next week, I'll report on investment through the first quarter of 2022.

You obviously have to be at the conference or be tuning in online to get that information. But the investment trends are certainly interesting. And you might wonder why I'm emphasizing the first quarter. Well, we're getting lots of questions as to how the expiration of the 10% basis step-up provision at the end of December is affecting the investors. Now obviously, if this legislation were to be enacted, then we'd have an opportunity to get the 10% of basis step-up again. But you know, we're getting questions about the effect of the fact that it has expired: Is that causing there to be a considerably less investment in the first quarter, what are the results? So we'll have that data to release next week and we'll discuss what we think that data collection reveals.

[00:16:20] **Brent Parker, CPA:** So that's going to be great for attendees and is information that you really can't get elsewhere at this point. So, I think that's going to be exciting to hear what's happening in Q1 2022. As you mentioned, Mike, such a healthy investment through 2021 with $24.4 billion, just for our funds that are being reported of the 978 funds that we're aware of publicly, which is a 21.5% jump from mid-2021, so that's what the report's saying, which is very exciting. And that's just to the end of 2021. I also kind of want to note that over two-thirds of the funds reporting are equity raises under $10 million. So it's not just large funds. There's all types of different funds reporting, all various areas of the country, as well as types of investments. So very exciting times and with this 10% step-up provision, of course you mentioned that is potentially coming to an end, and possibly a reboot of that as well as a 5%. But the proposed legislation, I think, addresses those issues. But even prior to the introduction, I'm hearing that, there's still a pretty heavy interest in fund investing. I'll look forward to learning about Q1 along with everybody else at the conference. But of course, that 10% basis step-up is a very nice incentive, but it's not the most significant incentive and so I think investors are aware of that.

[00:17:40] **Michael J. Novogradac, CPA:** No, I totally agree. And just to be sort of crystal clear for our listeners, that 10% base step-up provision has ended. So if you invest today under current law, you would not get that 10% basis step-up. The legislation that's been introduced, if enacted, and if that part of the legislation is enacted, then they'll definitely be an opportunity again for that 10% benefit to be available. But certainly now, when investors are looking at these investments, they need to be looking at them sans that 10% basis step-up provision.

But I did want to note to the listeners, as we're talking about this 10% basis step-up and how significant it is, in my May column in the Novogradac Journal of Tax Credits, we'll quantify the value of each of the three remaining tax benefits, major tax benefits, that remained at the end of 2021 for investing in opportunity zones. And most of our listeners will know that those three benefits would be the gain deferral, deferring recognition of the gain until 2026. That being one. The second one is the 10-year hold basis step-up, basically hold the investment in a fund for 10 years and you get a step-up to fair market value when you sell the investment. And then the third is the 10% basis step-up. And those are the three that are available to end of last year. And then heading in now in 2022, you have two of the three. You basically get the gain deferral to 2026. And obviously as you get closer to 2026, the deferral isn't as valuable, but you still continue to receive the 10-year hold, as long as you invest by 2026. So it remains to be seen how significant those two will be to continued investment, but I will note–I don't want to give up all the details of the article. I want you to read it, the column–but I will note that the 10% basis step-up value is pretty small relative to the value of the 10-year hold. So if you project any sort of appreciation in value of an asset over that 10-year period, which you wouldn't be making these investments and you didn't expect it, the value that a 10-year hold basis step-up is really substantial. And the yields aren't that dramatically affected by the loss of the 10% basis step-up, which is not to say it's not valuable. It is a valuable incentive to encourage investment sooner than later, but it's definitely not dispositive.

So let's go back to what we're discussing here, there's a conference. We spent a lot of time talking about the Washington Report, which is definitely a don't-miss session either in-person or online, but there's obviously also a lot more than the Washington Report going on at the conference. So maybe you break down or walk through some of the other, sessions and some of the speakers, on those sessions.

Other Panels at Conference

[00:20:40] **Brent Parker, CPA:** So first, after Washington Report, we have Structuring Insights. That's going to be exciting to see some of the structuring issues out there, with the fund structure and opportunity zones businesses and investment. Speakers that are going to be included are going to include, but not limited to Al Puchala, CEO of Cap Zone Impact Investments and Andrew Gradman, a leading tax attorney in the space. Next, we have Tax and Legal Issues, where OZ stakeholders are basically facing, with panelists including Ashley Tison, founder and CEO of Opportunity Zone Consultants and Michael Wiener, Greenberg Glusker LLP, a Los Angeles or Southern California firm leading in the space.

We also have a panel on SEC Rules and Regulations and how they may cause costly complexities for the unknowing or uninformed. So get informed. Some of the panelists include Coni Rathbone. She's a leading expert in both SEC and OZ rules and legislation, so it's going to be exciting to hear from her. We have a panel to address the evolution of fund reporting, which would include discussions on the impact of the proposed reporting requirements, among other things. And last, but definitely not least, we're actually having back-to-back panels. We're going to have OZB business experts and then also another panel after that where we have fund sponsors and they're going to discuss issues they are facing, what they're looking at, what they're looking for in investors. So the funds sponsors, what they're looking for investments with issues are facing. OZB panelists are going to include a Chris Russell, co-founder and managing director of Mercatus Partners and Greg James, a senior associate acquisitions and capital markets for StarPoint Properties. The fund sponsor panel speakers are going to include Greg Genovese, the CEO of USG Realty Capital, a very knowledgeable individual and exciting things that he's doing in his funds and we'll have Damian Gancman, chief financial officer from Cityview and finally Jeremy Keele, who's managing partner and co-founder of Catalyst Opportunity Funds. So it's going to be very exciting to see sort of the interplay between the two–or not interplay, but be able to see the issues facing businesses as well as issues facing funds and how the two are potentially related back to back sessions.

[00:22:53] **Michael J. Novogradac, CPA:** It's interesting that you talked about businesses because all the times at our conferences we're focused on opportunity funds themselves and the issues funds face investing in businesses, but obviously, businesses–trades or businesses–are the recipients of the equity investments that funds make, if the funds don't choose to own opportunity business property themselves. Generally they don't. So in essence, opportunity zones businesses are the main recipients of equity investments from opportunity funds. And that's the way the capital principally gets to opportunity zones. So if I'm a business that's in an opportunity zone, or if I'm a business thinking of moving to an opportunity zone or if I'm thinking about launching a business in an opportunity zone, what are some of the benefits do you think that I gain by attending the conference next week?

Benefits for Opportunity Zones Businesses at Conference

[00:23:40] **Brent Parker, CPA:** So I think No. 1 you should be definitely interested in what funds are looking for, what fund sponsor are looking for, so this is sort of a direct insight into that thought process and what they're looking for. The timing of investments that are being made and how the incentive, just the structure of the incentive and the rules regarding the incentive, how that is potentially driving fund behavior and how you can respond to that behavior to sort of better finance your capital stack.

[00:24:10] **Michael J. Novogradac, CPA:** Great. I would just note that when I talk about businesses in opportunity zones, I'm referring of course to both operating businesses, as well as development real estate. And obviously in development real estate, you're not going to be moving the business to an opportunity zone. That's mainly operating businesses, but you could be an existing owner that's considering a renovation or substantial renovation or looking at a new development in an opportunity zone, in which case you're likely seeking some equity capital from an opportunity fund. So thank you for that Brent.

June 30 End of 90% Test Relief

We are running a bit over, but I promised a bonus session here. There's something we haven't covered yet today and that's this June 30 deadline. So there is a June 30 deadline for opportunity funds to make investments now that the penalty relief in the 90% test has expired, or I guess will be expiring, is technically expired, which creates the June 30 deadline. Could you explain this deadline to our listeners and how what your clients are facing and addressing this expiration?

[00:25:17] **Brent Parker, CPA:** So IRS Notice 2021-10 in part extended relief from prior notices, so that, funds those funds in existence prior to February 2021 effectively were able to fail their 90% tests without a penalty through the end of 2021. Without getting into too much detail, there are some reasons the fund would not want to fail its 90% test, but holding too much cash at the end at the fund level, by the end of 2021 would not cause potential future issues down the road in general and would not cause penalties under that notice. So accordingly, there's a lot of funds that potentially failed their 90% tests as being reported now and reported in Form 8996 and are looking to place capital. Their first test that's going to be of relevance to them is going to be usually June 30, 2022. So I think there's a lot of funds that are looking to place capital by that deadline so they're not holding cash at their fund level.

[00:26:12] **Michael J. Novogradac, CPA:** Great. Thank you for that and thank you for sharing your insights today on the new legislation, as well as a preview of what's going to happen next week in Long Beach, which as I've noted many times the course of this podcast is both in-person and virtual. So depending upon your ability to travel and your desire to travel, given where we are with COVID-19, you have both options. If you do register and attend in person or virtually, either way you do have access to the recordings of the sessions for three months. But as I also mentioned earlier, be sure that you register. If you're going to go virtually, do it before the conference day, because the cost of registering afterward during that three-month period goes up and do look for the registration link in today's show notes, or you can just Google “Novogradac opportunity zones conference” and you will find it.

So Brent, there are certainly listeners who probably are interested in some of the things that you've shared today. You may have a question or two, so if you could share your email address.

[00:27:08] **Brent Parker, CPA:** Sure. It's Brent.Parker@Novoco.com.

[00:27:19] **Michael J. Novogradac, CPA:** Great. Thank you now to our listeners, please be sure to tune into next episode of Tax Credit Tuesday. My partner Alvin Lee will be the guest and we're going to discuss generally accepted accounting principles and how they affect renewable energy tax incentives negotiations and structures. That's obviously a complicated topic and it may sound a little bit boring, but it's not. So let me make it a bit simpler. While there are many community development tax incentives out there, and I would say most of the other incentives, like opportunities zones, like new market tax credits, like low-income housing tax credits tend to have fairly seasoned sponsors and regular investors. And a handful of structure types that are pretty commonly used. Renewable energy transactions are very different. Renewable energy transactions often have sponsors that are new and they have investors that are new. And there always seems to be more change in the investor pool, as well as the change or expansion of the sponsor pool. As a consequence, as you would guess, in that scenario you see a lot more startups in the renewable energy space. And then you see a greater variety of structures, in part because you have a greater variety of renewable energy tax credits, but also, as I mentioned, a variety of investors. And because there are many ways to structure a renewable transaction, as you imagine, there's a wider range of potential accounting issues that both investors and sponsors need to understand. And these accounting, these gap issues, they don't affect the cashflow of the property. They don't affect the tax benefits of the property as a general matter, but they do affect how a company accounts for their investment. And many of these investors are public companies or otherwise very concerned about their reported earnings. So they're very focused on accounting issues and those accounting issues will affect the structure of their transition. Which is a long-winded way of saying that if you're a stakeholder or might be a stakeholder in renewable energy transaction, you're going to want to tune in to be informed next week on some of the recommended practices or what are the common structures, that you might want to consider adopting and more importantly, probably, what structures or approaches you probably want to avoid.

I will say one caveat about next week's session: We are awaiting a HUD, Department of Housing and Urban Development, releasing the calendar year 2022 rent and income limits. And should that release come out–we were expecting it April 1st and it didn't come out yet and we don't know when it'll come out, but when it does come out, my partner Thomas Stagg will join me to discuss the results, what they mean and what they mean for owners and managers of low-income housing tax credit properties. So know that we might be preempted a week, if these HUD income numbers come out. So stay tuned.

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Off-Mike Section

So now I'm pleased to reach our Off-Mike section, where listeners get some off-topic advice and words of wisdom from our podcast guests. So, Brent, thank you for joining us again. I have a couple of questions for you. The first one, I can't help but ask, since we've spent a lot of time talking about the conference: Maybe you could share your tips for getting the most out of a conference.

[00:31:11] **Brent Parker, CPA:** Sure. No. 1, go to the workshops. I think get the most out of a conference, it's your best chance to really talk to experts and get some of that time. No. 2, the mixers. You have to go. The mixers are great. Get out there, talk to as many people as you can and finally, I would say also make sure that the app set up on your phone. It seems like a basic thing, but you want to be able to ask questions, if you don't like raising your hand, make sure you have that app available so you can ask questions. It seems like these things are trying to common knowledge, but you really want to get out there, ask as many questions, talk to as many people as you can, because you really don't know where your next opportunity is going to be.

[00:31:49] **Michael J. Novogradac, CPA:** And I would just sort of add to that to download the app in advance. You can also reach out to attendees through the app in advance. So I'd encourage everyone who's going to attend either in person or virtually to reach out to those you might want to meet and do as much of that networking as you can in advance and schedule times to meet at the breaks, for dinner and things of that nature with those who you're going there to meet. And networking is a key part of these sessions and the work you do in advance of getting to the conference were really paid dividends in terms of networking at the conference.

And then my other question, which isn't as direct to the topic at hand, or as indirect to the topic at hand, but it's a question that I spent a lot of time thinking about. I'm a little bit farther along in my career than you are. A lot farther in my career than many people–probably everyone at Novogradac–all 800 of us or so. But I do always think about my professional life and what do I wish that I knew that I know today that I wish I knew 10 or 15 years ago? And do I even think today, in 10 or 15 years from now, what am I going to wish I knew now? So what would you say that you do wish you knew 10 or 15 years ago or 20 years ago. You've been at Novogradac awhile.

[00:33:08] **Brent Parker, CPA:** I mean, it's been a very interesting almost 20 years and I'll say it's not been a consecutive 20 years. So I've learned things, both the easy way and the hard way. I'll say that sometimes you have to experience things yourself. But I left the firm about halfway through my stay and learned that the firm is a great place to be. So I think just be aware that you may change your decision in the future, so don't burn bridges, try and do things in a polite way and the way that you retain the most connections as possible. And sometimes you don't have to learn something by leaving or doing something you don't have to do. I mean I think that's the most important thing is definitely sort of being aware of what your alternatives are, thinking through them and trying to learn from what other people do. So if you have questions you want to talk to me about my experience at Novogradac or my experience in my career, I would love to talk to you about it and feel free to reach out.

[00:34:04] **Michael J. Novogradac, CPA:** Great. Thank you for that, Brent. I appreciate you joining me for the podcast and this little bonus session of words of wisdom. To our listeners, I'm Mike Novogradac. Thanks for listening.

Additional Resources

Email

Brent Parker

Opportunity Zones Legislation

Opportunity Zones Transparency, Extension and Improvement Act

Novogradac 2022 Spring Opportunity Zones Conference

Conference Registration