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THE BUSINESS REVIEW

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Expanded Price Chopper deal boosts inkjet refiller's business

The Business Review (Albany) - by [Michael DeMasi](#) The Business Review

A year after changing the name of his business to **i Fill Inkjets**, Mark Tremont has expanded to 26 **Price Chopper** stores in six states.

Located in the photo lab of the supermarkets, i Fill Inkjets refills empty computer print cartridges at prices 40 percent to 60 percent less than what consumers would pay for new cartridges.

New cartridges can cost \$11 to \$40, depending on the model.

With 300 million empty cartridges thrown away every year, recycling is a potentially lucrative business.

Retail chains such as Office Max and Walgreens now have automatic refilling machines in their stores or give consumers a discount on new cartridges when they turn in old ones.

"This is not a business that's going to go away," said Tremont, 59. "It's going to get bigger."

Tremont got into the business in January 2005, when he opened a kiosk at Colonie Center as a franchisee of a Canadian company, **Island Ink-Jet**.

He followed that with a store in Delmar and then expanded to the photo departments at Price Choppers in Clifton Park, Latham, Rotterdam and Glens Falls.

"I have filled over 50,000 cartridges in the last 2 1/2 years," Tremont said.

He ended his franchise agreement with Island Ink-Jet in October 2006 and re-branded the business as i Fill Inkjet.

In February, he came to terms with the owner of Price Chopper, **Golub Corp.**, to move into more of the chain's stores.

It took until early July to install the equipment and train store employees how to properly fill the cartridges.

Price Chopper wanted time to work out any bugs and waited until mid-October to officially

launch the service in the new stores with a one-week, \$5 special for all refills.

Tremont said he and Price Chopper share the revenue for each refill, but he wouldn't disclose the amount.

Price Chopper takes care of the staffing and marketing while Tremont is responsible for technical support, providing ink to the stores and other supplies.

"We never formally defined it but I would say it's like outsourcing," Tremont said. "They outsourced the technical and service aspects of the ink refilling business."

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