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Syracuse native offers ink refills

Posted by [Tim Knauss](#) July 02, 2008 4:55PM

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Courtesy of Mark Tremont

Syracuse native Mark Tremont stands in front of his I Fill Inkjets store in Delmar, near Albany.

Americans throw away an estimated 300 million to 400 million inkjet printer cartridges each year, according to government and industry estimates. That not only loads up landfills with plastic that could be reused or recycled; it also sends toxic ink residues underground where they can contaminate groundwater.

Syracuse native **Mark Tremont** would like to suggest a better -- and cheaper -- alternative. Tremont is the founder of [I Fill Inkjets](#), an Albany-based business that refills customers' cartridges with ink for about half what it would cost them to buy a new, brand-name cartridge.

He has two independent stores in the Albany area and provides the service at 25 supermarkets across the state, including one here in his hometown, through a partnership with **Price Chopper**.

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Syracuse-area residents can refill their inkjet cartridges at the Price Chopper at the corner of Erie Boulevard and Midler Avenue. Price Chopper employees trained and supplied by Tremont do the work, and Tremont and Price Chopper split the revenues.

Refilling printer cartridges is good for the environment -- Tremont says he's kept about 65,000 ink-stained plastic cartridges out of landfills since he opened his first kiosk in 2005 -- but customers seek him out mainly to save money, he said. "Price definitely drives this," Tremont said.

Tremont, who formerly worked as an accountant, grew up in Syracuse and attended **St. Anthony's High School** and **LeMoyne College**, graduating from the latter in 1969. He does business as I Fill Inkjets, but his company's real name is 1020 Midland Corp., named for the address where he grew up.

Most printer cartridges can be refilled at least once, and as many as eight times, before they get too gummed up or too broken down to print, Tremont said. It's more complicated than just squirting new ink into the chamber; often there are heads to clean or chips to reset.

About 80 percent of the cartridges that come in can be refilled, he said. Of those that get refilled, fewer than 5 percent fail to print properly when the customers get home, in which case they can return the cartridges for a refund, Tremont said.

I Fill Inkjets lists its prices [online](#). The company competes with online inkjet retailers such as [LaserMonks.com](#) that sell recycled inkjet cartridges. They also compete with retail stores and online recyclers that pay for spent cartridges, which schools and charities often collect to raise money.

Even the **U.S. Postal Service** is getting into the act with a [pilot project](#) providing free postage to consumers who mail inkjet cartridges to a recycler. The program hasn't hit the Syracuse area yet, but probably will soon, officials said.

Bottom line: Whether you refill or not, there's no excuse for throwing your cartridges in the garbage.

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