



Just Junk, which started in St. Catharines, has begun selling franchises in Florida. Pictured is president Mike Thorne.

THIS WEEK FILE PHOTO

JUST JUNK SELLING FRANCHISES IN FLORIDA

A junk removal business that started in St. Catharines in 2003 with a \$500 cargo van and has since expanded operations across the Golden Horseshoe now has its sights set on the Sunshine State.

Mike Thorne got the inspiration for Just Junk while working for Bell Canada in Toronto, after being asked to remove old office equipment. His unsuccessful attempts to find a debris removal company led to what he called "an epiphany."

He quickly left his well-paying job and moved back home to the Garden City. His initial insight was reaffirmed, when, after helping his sister renovate her home, he hauled away the construction debris to the dump and saw nearly 40 cars lined up to use the landfill.

He purchased an old cargo van, came up with a company name and opened for business.

Last year he began selling rights to markets across the province including: Hamilton, Burlington, Oakville and Mississauga.

Now he has partnered with an entrepreneur in the U.S. who is looking for business people to open up the franchise stateside, with the initial focus being in Florida.

The business has thrived in part because of the emergence of the do-it-yourself renovation industry, but also due to a growth in the number of retirees who find themselves downsizing.

To cut costs and help the environment, more than 60 per cent of the items being hauled away are diverted from landfills and is either recycled or donated to local charities, such as Habitat for Humanity.