

Albany Law Firm Looking to Shake Up Local Legal Scene

If you're a lawyer, check your mailbox for a letter from Mathew Tully.

Tully, partner in Tully Rinckey PLLC in Albany, is looking to hire five attorneys to open an office in the Syracuse area.

It won't be downtown, he said, because that's what all the other law firms do. "Whatever every other law firm is doing, we generally do the opposite," he said Friday during a visit to Syracuse.

Dressed in a black T-shirt with his firm's name on the chest, Tully said he sent more than 3,000 letters lawyers in Central New York.

"This letter is going to ruffle some feathers," he said.

"Our firm will provide you with a higher compensation package than you are making now," the letter declares.

And it promises to aim high in its marketing. "You won't see Tully Rinckey PLLC running any Jim "The Hammer" Shapiro-type ads," the letter says.

Tully said that attorneys will all make more than \$65,000 a year and that in Tully Rinckey's offices in Albany, Washington and Virginia, most make over \$100,000.

The higher pay comes about because the firm doesn't have such "dead weight," as senior partners suctioning off profits and "baby associates" getting paid more than they bring in.

Specifically, Tully is looking for attorneys in matrimonial, criminal defense, trust and estate, real estate and general litigation. He plans to open the office April 1 in a suburban office park.

Tully said the model for his firm isn't a traditional law firm, but a successful service company. "Quality service to clients," he said, is not only what distinguishes the firm, but what makes it like a well-run plumbing company. In time, he said customers will find they like the service and refer others. "Just like a plumber," he said.

The expansion into Syracuse is a step in Thruway strategy that Tully said will take his firm to Rochester nine months after opening in Syracuse and to Buffalo nine months after that.

He said the firm has spent a great deal of money on technology, including a computer network that allows clients to access their case files anytime online. The firm's website, www.tullylegal.com, includes a live-chat feature, and videos of some of the firm's attorneys discussing their area of practice.

Tully said that when he his partner looked for where to expand next, they saw that the Syracuse area offered "the best pool of legal talent and the most promising resources to help us succeed," he said. And, he said, competing law firms didn't even have web sites.

A Long Islander who moved to Hunter before opening the practice in Albany in 2003, Tully said he was looking forward to changing the legal community in Central New York. His attorneys will be going for the win, not trading favors with other attorneys, he said. "It's the New York style of legal representation," he said.