



## Voices of the valley: Collective Copies

By The Republican Newsroom

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Adam R. Trott, left, and Steve O. Striner

It appears businesses everywhere are closing, struggling or waiting for better times. Being printers, we have a lot of contact with our community, and our business reflects the decline around us. We've heard lots of stories – both heartbreaking and uplifting – about what companies have done to keep their doors open while being forced to do more with less. Our story is about people working together through these tough economic times.

Collective Copies was founded in 1983 by recently unionized workers from a copy shop. We are worker-owned and based in town centers. We make decisions by consensus, including those concerning staff changes. This model tends to keep workers long-term. At the same time, we have our homes, families and lives invested in the communities where we work.

It may seem that this would make survival in difficult times tough, but as a collective, "last hired, first fired" doesn't apply. We also know more about our challenges and have a work force motivated to be creative and make things happen. Voluntarily and by consensus, we have cut hours; launched Levellers Press, a small publishing house; made our color printing more competitive; and redirected our focus on selling more products from other worker co-operatives. We have also launched a Web store where you can buy it all online ([www.collectivecopies.com](http://www.collectivecopies.com)).

In addition, we have chosen to use recycled paper, provide worker-owners with decent pay and benefits and make 10 percent pre-tax donations to our broader community. This spirit, we feel, is key to sustaining our business in a hyper-competitive, fast-changing industry. Our collective ownership and our mission-driven attitude, we feel, have sustained us through the economic downturn.

### Business profile

**Name:** Collective Copies

**Owner:** Collective ownership

**Locations:** 93 Main St., Florence section of Northampton; 55 Main St. Belchertown; 71 South Pleasant St., Amherst

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