

# Evergreen tech firm poised for growth

## Area home to many small companies

By Jonathan Ellis

Evergreen-Russell Straub didn't make it to last week's Colorado Technology Summit. He had work to do.

The Evergreen man serves as president and CEO of Loanbright, a high-tech company that sells online marketing and productivity solutions to the mortgage industry. The little company is one of many high-tech success stories tucked away in the mountains of Colorado.

Smaller companies like Loanbright don't make headline while tech giants such as WorldCom and Global Crossing buckle under the weight of their own ineptitude and malfeasance.

Loanbright employs 11 in offices in Evergreen, California, Vermont and Massachusetts. This year the company is on pace to do three-times more business than last year

There's no relaxing," Straub said. "We're pedal the the metal. We're going as hard as we can."

They may be going hard at Loanbright, but they're not going out of control. Straub worries about growing too fast. He doesn't want to "bet the company," he said, on a single blockbuster deal that could hurt it in the future.

"Instead of going out and getting married really quickly, go out on a few dates first," he said about controlling growth.

Loanbright has managed to pick up steam in part because of a strong housing and mortgage market. When mortgage rates sunk after 9/11, Loanbright did well. But as the housing and refinancing markets slowed, Loanbright did even better as mortgage companies raced to find sales leads.

Straub said he could probably use more help. But again, he's worried about growing too quickly.

He's advertised for two positions in the last several months and been inundated with resumes-evidence that a lot of techies are looking for work. Many resumes were from people way overqualified for the jobs.

"I think there are a lot of people that are unemployed or under-employed," he said. "And a lot of people who are just scared."

Straub has been self-employed for 15 years. It's rewarding, but like many small business owners, he also worries that "the bottom could fall out" at any time.

"You're always nervous," he said. "I've got a lot of people here and they're dependent on us."