



LAVAL TECHNOPOLE

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Couche-Tard gets a new home

Couche-Tard, one of the brightest lights of the Laval economy, has decided to move the staff at its head office and Eastern Canada service centre, currently housed on Saint-Martin Boulevard East, into a brand new, 4,645-square-metre building on Industriel Boulevard that it will own. As construction is slated to be completed next March, administrative employees will be settling into their new quarters in May 2010. This major project will involve an investment of more than \$5 million.

Since the opening of its first convenience store in 1980 in Laval, the Couche-Tard network has experienced constant growth. Today, under the banners Couche-Tard, Mac's and Circle K, it has some 9,500 stores throughout the world—2,049 in Canada, 3,858 in the United States, and 3,600 located in China, the island of Guam, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Macao and Mexico. To sum up, Couche-Tard employs more than 52,000 people and achieves close to \$16 billion in annual sales.

Couche-Tard has 670 stores in Québec and the Maritimes. The new service centre will be home to the 230 employees who take care of marketing, accounting, customer service, real estate, information technology, human resources and other management functions for those stores.

The quality of working life is a priority for Couche-Tard, as the architectural concept of its service centre shows. It has been designed to make maximum use of natural light, while what artificial lighting will be used will reflect not only a concern for energy efficiency, but also for the type of atmosphere it will create. "We currently occupy four floors of a building, and we felt that we could optimize communications between the various departments. The working areas in



the new service centre will be set up over two floors using an open-plan concept to foster interaction among team members," points out Michel Bernard, Vice-President, Operations Eastern Canada.

Because almost all of its employees live in the Greater Montreal area (Laval, Montreal, the northern ring of suburbs), which provides an excellent pool for recruitment, when moving its service centre became an issue Couche-Tard management did not think twice about once again choosing Laval for its location. As Mr. Bernard explains: "We have a sentimental attachment to Laval, since this is where the company was founded and grew. The city fulfils our needs in terms of accessibility to transportation networks, services and labour. In fact, we have never really considered putting our head office anywhere else. We are truly proud to be a Laval company."

The gain in space resulting from the construction of the new administrative centre will certainly be an added plus for employees' quality of working life, but it is also part of the company's plan to double the number of its stores around the world within the next

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Surfing in Laval? It will soon be possible!

Before long, Centropolis will be hit by a huge wave of fun! That's because Maeva Surf will be offering Laval and Greater Montreal area residents, as well as tourists, a brand new activity: indoor surfing. This new initiative represents a \$2.5 million investment that includes the purchase of the appropriate technology, the outfitting of facilities, and the hiring and training of staff.

The story behind Maeva Surf involves four investors, two of them, Jean-François Desrochers and Patricia Dupuy, sports enthusiasts who discovered the surf simulator while on a trip. Pressing on with their research on such systems, they found out that the technology involved in producing the artificial wave is called the FlowRider, a system of ultrapowerful pumps that propels water in a pool at a speed of 40 km/h. The pool itself, 93 square metres in size, is covered with a mesh surface, similar to that of a trampoline, which reduces the risk of injury and makes drowning practically impossible. "There are close to 150 wave facilities of this type around the world," explains Mr. Desrochers, "and there has never been any report of an accident or incident. Moreover, we will be implementing various safety procedures, as well as providing special training for our staff, whose primary duty will be to see to visitors' safety. Given all that, indoor surfing remains an extremely safe sport."

A typical indoor surfing session begins by the visitor being greeted and provided with a locker and a towel before he or she goes through a warm-up. A wave professional then takes over and, if the visitor is a beginner, gives him or her a brief theoretical and practical training session. The professionals do their utmost to provide challenges for more experienced "surfers"! A surfing session usually lasts about 30 minutes. Since the pool can accommodate up to 16 people at the same time, Maeva Surf's new activity appears ideal for family outings and get-togethers among friends and co-workers. In fact, the company is targeting customers 10 years and older who are in good physical condition. "This is a real sport," points out Mr. Desrochers. "It's most similar to surfing, but the movements and board used are somewhat different."



A FlowRider surf simulator set up on a cruise ship.

However, Maeva Surf will be more than just a ride on a wave. Its 372-square-metre building will house a boutique where visitors will find all the clothing and accessories needed for the surfing lifestyle. The facilities will also include highly convenient changing areas with showers, drying rooms and lockers, as well as a lunch counter serving beverages, paninis and salads so that surfers can regain their strength once their session is done. Finally, a lounge area stocked with books and magazines dealing with the world of surfing will be available for those accompanying surfers... or awaiting their go at the wave. Visitors to Maeva Surf will therefore enjoy the complete surfing experience!

The two entrepreneurs are optimistic about the success this new tourist activity will achieve. "We estimate 42,000 visits during the first year of operation," states Mr. Desrochers, who has conducted a thorough study of the market. "We intend to set up a management team that will be able to operate the facility independently, which will enable us to open Maeva Surf franchises in other areas, particularly in Quebec City and Montreal."

Jean-François Desrochers and Patricia Dupuy are therefore getting ready to launch an indoor surfing craze! The date planned for the opening of Maeva Surf? Next April!



For further information about Maeva Surf, dial 450 721-0486, or send an e-mail to: maevasurf@videotron.ca.

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five years. It is therefore essential that Couche-Tard, which builds on both targeted acquisitions and the opening of new stores to ensure its growth, have the space needed to support the development of its business. "We are constantly expanding. Couche-Tard is now the second-largest chain of convenience stores in North America. During the next few years, we intend to strengthen our presence within our current markets, as well as develop new ones," concludes Mr. Bernard.



For further information about Alimentation Couche-Tard Inc., please contact Michel Bernard, Vice-President, Operations Eastern Canada, at 450 662-6632, extension 4677, or visit the company's Web site: www.couche-tard.com.



TLA looks to Florida, Haiti... and the world

Laval's leading architectural firm, Tremblay L'Écuyer architectes, is merrily continuing its growth. To its headquarters in Laval and satellite offices in Saint-Eustache, Saint-Jérôme and Montreal was lately added a subsidiary in Aventura, Florida, while at the same time its team has been putting its stamp on a number of projects around the globe, most recently in Haiti.

Contrary to what might be thought, TLA did not set out to conquer the world. "We just wanted to offer a variety of projects to our employees," states Stéphane L'Écuyer, co-founder of the firm with Denis G. Tremblay. "Working internationally offers that kind of variety. It is a rewarding experience and a real challenge for our staff, since not only do standards differ from one country to another, but also the environmental factors that have to be taken into consideration in the design of a project."

That was precisely the case in Haiti, where the company took on the role of mission head. Its mandate, awarded by Groupe SMi, which had been given the project by the United Nations, was to supervise the construction of a shipping base at Les Cayes. The TLA team had to deal with constraints related to the availability of materials, as well as make allowances for various problems such as winds, tides and hurricanes—requirements that do not affect Canadian projects to the same high degree as in the Caribbean!

However, the firm certainly does not lack for work in Canada. TLA has designed several Métro supermarkets, Jean Coudu drugstores, BMW, Mercedes-Benz and Honda dealerships, residential complexes, medical centres, office buildings, schools and more. The firm has also provided Laval with some of its most beautiful buildings: Le St-Martin Hotel, Cité de l'Avenir, the Le Martingale complex and condos, and Boisé Notre-Dame, to name just a few. Currently under construction in Montreal, the Downtown St-Martin Hotel is one of the latest jewels in the TLA portfolio.

The firm is also active in the United States through its Florida subsidiary, IDEA, which is celebrating its first year of operation this month. Its team, headed by a Canadian architect whose credentials are recognized by our neighbours to the south, and which includes three Americans—two architects and one engineer—is busy working on various projects, among them the revitalization of disadvantaged neighbourhoods. "We are currently holding talks with the managers of four major university medical centres in order to get them involved in a number of projects that we are developing with some partners. We would like to build integrated centres that include a medical clinic, an emergency department for seniors' residences, a café and a drugstore," explains Mr. L'Écuyer. "It is possible that this kind of project will soon become a reality in North Miami Beach and Hallandale..."



Le St-Martin Hotel in Laval

However, the IDEA subsidiary will not limit itself to projects in the state of Florida. Mr. L'Écuyer considers it more a platform for working throughout the United States, as well as in South America. "That way we will be able to offer our employees more and more experiences abroad, as well as opportunities for advancement."

Those opportunities are indeed real at TLA, since the firm's strategy for growth has been based on employee empowerment and accountability. "Fully half of our 50 employees are project managers," relates Mr. L'Écuyer. "You have to know how to delegate in order to move ahead. That's what Denis G. Tremblay and I have learned since we founded the company in 1997. We are continuing our expansion step by step by building on the solid foundations we have put in place." Expertise, passion and humility are the values that the two partners have inculcated in their team, and that form the basis of the firm's success since its beginnings.

TREMBLAY L'ÉCUYER



architectes

internationaldesign



engineeringarchitecture

For further information about TLA, please contact Stéphane L'Écuyer, co-founder, at 450 629-9992, or visit the firm's Web site at: www.tremblaylecuyer.com.



Energy efficiency is at work in Laval companies



Daniel Bazinet, Head of Business Strategy in Hydro-Québec's Energy Efficiency Division

Since 2004, under its Empower Program for Industrial Systems, Hydro-Québec has enabled its business customers to benefit from significant financial assistance by providing reimbursement of up to 40% of the total eligible cost of projects to improve energy efficiency.

This program has many advantages for companies: not only are they able to receive substantial financial assistance enabling them to amortize their investments more quickly, but they also achieve energy savings and, at the same time, considerably reduce their operating expenses. Furthermore, the return on such an investment can be quite fast—between 12 and 24 months, according to the studies conducted by Hydro-Québec's Energy Efficiency Division. "That's the real clincher," states Daniel Bazinet, Head of Business Strategy in that division. "The second most important issue is the environmental one. If certain companies see this program as an opportunity to improve their competitive position by taking on the image of a 'green' corporate citizen, others—and they are the majority—are genuinely interested in doing what they can for the environment."

This program reflects the government corporation's core values, which advocate the wise use of energy. "It's a matter of avoidable costs," points out Mr. Bazinet. "If the cost of an energy efficiency program is less than the new supply price out on the market, we consider it to be a cost-effective investment."

Hydro-Québec is also interested in promoting the decrease of energy consumption for environmental reasons. Even if hydroelectricity is considered "clean" energy, it nonetheless remains that the building of dams involves major expenditures of power and a huge investment. These impacts are largely minimized, however, if the complete life cycle of power stations and other hydroelectric facilities are taken into consideration. Still, it is to Hydro-Québec's advantage to curb the increasing demand for energy, the basis for this program and its great incentives for industrial customers, whose consumption accounts for 50% of all electricity produced.

Hydro-Québec's overall energy efficiency plan for all the organization's customers targets energy savings of 11 terawatts per hour by 2015—8% of current consumption, and approximately two and a half times the City of Laval's annual consumption. The program has enabled savings of 4.1 terawatts per hour to be made to date.

"Being energy wise is cost-effective for companies, since it allows them to increase both their productivity and profitability," adds Mr. Bazinet. "It is also a cost-effective solution for Hydro-Québec and our society as a whole, since we have a patrimonial bank of 165 terawatts per hour that we must conserve. Finally, it's good for the environment."



Project to maximize the energy efficiency of heating and cooling systems under the Empower Program for Building Optimization

Photo: Hydro-Québec

Who is the program for?

In particular, this program is intended for manufacturing companies using equipment, systems or processes in an industrial building. Projects to introduce, retrofit or upgrade facilities, electrical systems and processes are eligible.

For example, projects involving the purchase of highly energy-efficient motors, the introduction of centralized management systems to control compressors, the replacement of T12 fluorescent lights with T8 models, the installation of ventilation systems relying on the intake of fresh air from the outside, etc., would all be eligible for financial assistance.



To learn more about Hydro-Québec's Empower Program for Industrial Systems, contact Business Customer Services at 1 877 817-1433 or visit the Program's Web site at: www.hydroquebec.com/business/appui_pmi/index.html.



LAB Research: On its way to energy efficiency

Since the introduction of the program, some 150 Laval companies have taken advantage of the advice and financial assistance offered by Hydro-Québec. LAB Research is just one of them.

A preclinical contract research company established in Laval, LAB Research invested heavily in environmentally friendly energy systems when it enlarged its head office in 2008. The installation of variable speed-drives for pumps and fans to restrict energy demands as needed, as well as the introduction of a centralized heating management system, are some of the measures that LAB chose to reduce its energy requirements. The result? The company should save 2.2 million kW per year. Moreover, it received \$470,000 in financial assistance from Hydro-Québec for these various initiatives.

LAB Research's president, Luc Mainville, explains the two main reasons behind its decisions: "First, we wanted to be able to better control our operating expenses in order to be more competitive in our market. Second, as good corporate citizens, we believe that we should actively take part, insofar as we can, in helping to protect the environment."



For further information about LAB Research, please contact Luc Mainville, President, at 450 973-2240, or visit the company's Web site at: www.labresearch.com.

Hydro-Québec hails the efforts of Yvon Mignault et fils

On September 23, Hydro-Québec paid tribute to Yvon Mignault et fils for its original and dynamic approach to raising awareness about energy efficiency and promoting effective products by naming it the winner of the 2009 ENERGY WISE Award of Excellence in the "Master Electrician" category.

Through this competition, Hydro-Québec salutes the efforts of those companies helping to protect the environment by successfully undertaking innovative projects as part of the utility's energy efficiency programs.

According to Simon Leclair, President of Yvon Mignault et fils' S.C.A.N. Énergie division, "The fact that we have received this award validates the initiatives we have taken so far and provides us with further impetus to continue in this direction, despite the current difficult economic situation."

Specializing in new construction and the rehabilitation of existing buildings, the company was founded in 1983 by master electrician Yvon Mignault. When he retired in 2002, two of Mr. Mignault's employees decided to take over the reins and buy the business: Martin Barbe, now president, and Claude Gravel, vice-president.

In 2007, the company's management made the decision to specialize in energy conservation and the sale and installation of energy-efficient lighting products for commercial and industrial buildings. It therefore created its S.C.A.N. Énergie division, a Hydro-Québec business partner whose mission is to offer businesses free studies of their buildings' energy efficiency in terms of lighting. A precise mathematical evaluation provides a clear picture of energy consumption and lighting quality, in addition to an estimate of what it would cost to update fixtures and systems, and decrease CO₂ emissions and mercury levels, as well as what savings could be expected.

In every case, the savings are obvious from the very first electricity bill received following the replacement of outdated lighting systems, with consumption sometimes being reduced by more than 50%. In certain situations, annual savings of over a million kWh have even been achieved!

As Messrs. Leclair and Gravel are proud to declare: "This is the best energy efficiency program that Hydro-Québec has offered so far. We firmly believe in it, and every business that we have helped institute an energy-control plan has seen immediate results."

Besides savings, updating such systems increases lighting quality, reduces the risk of mistakes and accidents, improves productivity and lowers maintenance costs. Some lights now last up to 35,000 hours—which means that seven years can go by before anyone has to think about changing a bulb!

However, the most important consideration for the Yvon Mignault et fils team is what its energy-saving initiatives mean for the environment and future generations.



To learn more about Yvon Mignault et fils and S.C.A.N. Énergie, please contact Simon Leclair, President, at 450 937-0507, or visit their Web site at: www.scanenergie.com.



No cold showers in store for Rodam International

Rodam International is a company specializing in the manufacture and distribution of bathroom accessories and furniture.

Established in 1980 in Ville Saint-Laurent, the company originally sold construction materials. However, thanks to the taste for innovation and perseverance of its owner and founder, André Madore, as well as the devoted efforts of his team, it was in the 1990s that Rodam really began to take off with the creation of its flexible Bungy© shower hose.

It was seeing the exploits of bungy-jumping enthusiasts that in fact gave Mr. Madore the idea of inventing a stretchable hose for hand-held showers. First marketed in California under the name Afeel and promoted with the slogan "I feel good," the Bungy© hose, manufactured according to a unique patented process, is now distributed in the United States, as well as throughout Canada, which is responsible for 80% of the company's sales.

Over the years, Rodam International has developed its expertise in the manufacture and distribution of bathroom accessories by offering premium products meeting the needs and requirements of increasingly demanding consumers. That is why it decided to create its own line of shower heads and hand-held showers under the Rainb'o brand.

Originally manufactured in Europe, Rodam International products are now made in China, where the cost of labour is lower, enabling the company to market high-quality products at much more affordable prices. The Laval team supervises the 11 employees who have been working for the last 6 years in a factory in Ningbo, a port city in the northeast corner of the Chinese province of Zhejiang. However, product quality control and packaging take place in the company's head office in Laval, where it has been located for the last 15 years. Six employees handle administration, while three workers take care of duties in its 930-square-metre warehouse.

In order to diversify its market, four years ago Rodam International entered into an exclusive partnership agreement with a manufacturer of bathroom furniture. Various types of such furniture are produced in a wide range of styles, patterns and finishes, and vanities are sold with or without sinks.

Today, Rodam International products can be found in the largest hardware, construction material and home renovation chains, among them Rona, BMR, Patrick Morin, Groupe Canac-Marquis Grenier, Home Hardware, Metro Supply, Amber, and more, as well as in a number of specialized stores throughout Canada.



Rodam International's head office in Laval

Firmly convinced of their exceptional quality, Rodam International offers its customers a lifetime guarantee against any fault in materials or workmanship on all its products, pledging to repair or replace any that are defective—of course, on condition that they have not been damaged as a result of improper use.

According to Mr. Madore, what explains the huge success of the company he founded close to 30 years ago is the fact that he was able to "build a team of right-hand men." That team includes André Roy, a friend and long-time partner, as well as his three sons, Philippe, Maxime and Alexandre, enthusiastic young entrepreneurs who have a number of big plans in mind for the future of the family business, among them the development of a major retailing arm.

In fact, Rodam International has decided to open its own chain of stores specializing in the sale of bathroom accessories and furniture. The first Aquadiva dépôt opened its doors two months ago, just beside the company's Laval office. A second store is slated to open on Curé Labelle Boulevard in Sainte-Rose in January 2010. However, the dynamic Rodam International team's ambitions are not about to stop there, as it plans to open at least four or five Aquadiva dépôt outlets in the Montreal area and on the South Shore during the next few years. What's more, the young "right-hand men" are already thinking about rolling out their new banner just about everywhere in Québec!



To learn more about Rodam International, dial 450 682-6822, or visit the company's Web site at: www.rodam.com. Further information about Aquadiva dépôt is available at 450 681-3845, or www.aquadivadepot.com.



Beaupré & Associés celebrates its 20th anniversary with a new workspace

Last fall, Beaupré & Associés, a firm specializing in landscape architecture and urban design, moved into its new premises on Dagenais Boulevard. The opening of these offices, as well as the 20th anniversary of the company's founding, was celebrated recently. In a certain way, Beaupré & Associés has given itself a present representing an investment of close to \$1 million.

Located on the ground floor of a 650-square-metre building, the new offices provide 50% more space for some fifteen architects and other employees. "Our firm has been steadily growing for several years. Our team is getting bigger, and larger, more functional workspaces had become a necessity. Along with a partner that occupies the floor above, we chose to build a facility that we could fit out according to our taste and requirements," declares Louis Beaupré, President and founder.

Because design is the focus of the company, special attention was paid to both the exterior and interior of the building. Thanks to the choice of plants that fare well in dry conditions, landscaping was designed to keep maintenance to a minimum. In addition to creating a welcoming atmosphere and enlivening the look of the premium materials used, such as laminated wood, the many windows enable savings to be made on the cost of electricity, since they allow ample natural light to flood into the interior, especially in the open-plan studio. "The studio is a dynamic environment that helps us pool our ideas and stimulates creativity," points out Mr. Beaupré.

Actually, creativity is the No. 1 resource at Beaupré & Associés, whose projects have been lauded countless times by its peers. For example, in 2006 and 2008, two projects executed by the firm—the development of the master design plan for the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges cemetery and the design for the botanical noise barrier along Highway 15 in Laval—received special commendation from the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects. However, Beaupré & Associés' complete portfolio is far more substantial: "Each project has its own distinctive characteristics," mentions its president. "We create designs for parks, green spaces, sports grounds and real estate developments, revitalize commercial arteries, revegetate areas along roads, and more."

The continuous increase in demand for Beaupré & Associés' services can be explained, at least in part, by the awareness of municipal elected officials, construction contractors, corporate executives and the population in general of the importance of sustainable development and the environment's direct influence on quality of life. This societal awareness, combined with the diversification of its clientele, has made it possible for the company to ride out the recession without any difficulty.

It should also be noted that Beaupré & Associés enjoys an excellent reputation within the business community, as shown by its being named Company of the Month in May 2007 by Laval's Chambre de commerce et d'industrie. The expertise that it has acquired over the last 20 years, project after project, its personalized approach, original design solutions, respect for its customers' objectives, budgets and deadlines, proven technological innovation, and the "sustainable development"-focus it favours in its work are all factors that have contributed to its success.

The firm intends to build on all these elements as its development continues. Furthermore, it should soon further enlarge its environmental horizons and, in doing so, its team.



Beaupré & Associés' new head office



Design for the waiting areas at the Le Carrefour bus terminal in Laval

To learn more about Beaupré & Associés, please contact Louis Beaupré, President, at 450 963-2220, extension 211, or visit the firm's Web site: www.beaupreassocies.com.



Eliapharma Services' good practices have been recognized... and certified

A scant two years after its founding, contract research organization (CRO) Eliapharma Services is about to receive Good Laboratory Practices (GLP) certification from the Standards Council of Canada under the latter's Program for the Accreditation of Laboratories/Canada (PALCAN).

Developed by the OECD—the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development—GLP-related requirements cover practically every aspect of laboratory study management, from the initial planning stage to the maintenance and use of laboratory equipment and the archiving and publishing of data. These requirements stipulate the total transparency of study processes in order to enable all activities to be tracked in accordance with strict procedures.

Compliance with GLP principles helps ensure that studies are conducted according to the requirements prescribed by the ICH (International Conference on Harmonisation), an entity comprising regulatory authorities and pharmaceutical industry representatives from the Americas, Europe and Asia responsible for harmonizing the clinical trial procedures that precede the registration of pharmaceutical products by government agencies. Recognition under this initiative facilitates the acceptance of studies in OECD member states. Furthermore, it enables CROs to establish a name for themselves among research centres and independent researchers, as well as fosters their ability to access new preclinical and clinical markets.

For the last few months, Eliapharma's analytical chemical laboratory, which provides specialized preclinical, analytical and bioanalytical services for biotechs, CROs, private and university research centres, pharmaceutical companies and hospitals, has enjoyed a new environment that promotes scientific collaboration and the development of invaluable expertise. This is due to the fact that in January of this year, Eliapharma Services moved its facilities from Montréal to the INRS building on Bernard-Belleau in Laval, located in the centre of The Biotech City and housing seven specialized laboratories.

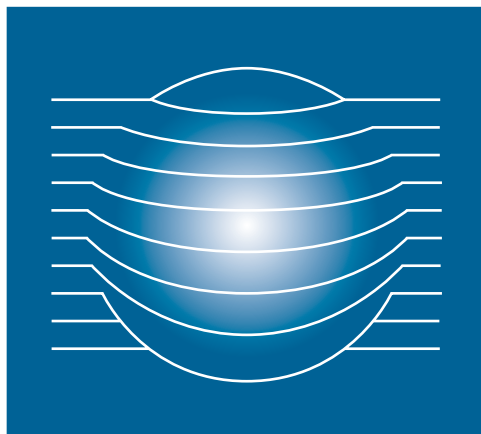


Since its very beginnings, Eliapharma Services has been able to institute a quality control system that complies with Health Canada and FDA (U.S. Food and Drug Administration) standards and requirements. Thanks to its nimble organization, the company can offer high-calibre services tailored to its customers' specific needs at very competitive prices.

GLP certification involves a long and expensive process requiring a great deal of both discipline and patience. However, for Samir Nassr, President of Eliapharma Services, it is a necessary one, since such certification will enable the firm to implement its business expansion projects. In the medium term, the company's compact team of four employees, currently offering its services in Laval and on the island of Montreal, hopes to provide support for its customers during every stage of the drug development process in Canada, the United States, and even Europe.



For further information about Eliapharma Services, please contact Samir Nassr, President, at 450 686-5800, or by e-mail at samir.nassr@eliapharma.com, or visit the company's Web site: www.eliapharma.com.



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