



# LAVAL TECHNOPOLE

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## Travel through space at the Cosmodôme!

Last February, management at Laval's Cosmodôme welcomed the news that, as part of the Québec-Municipalities Infrastructure Program, Space Camp Canada would receive a \$7 million subsidy to update its Space Science Centre exhibition. Moreover, the City of Laval and various other partners will provide \$3.5 million in additional funding.

Since its opening in 1994, the Cosmodôme has helped position Laval as a prime destination on the map of the Greater Montreal area's major tourist attractions. "Thanks to the new exhibition," explains Paul Lemay, Director of the City of Laval's Community Life, Culture and Communications Department, "the Space Science Centre, which is none other than the leading space museum in the country, will become the spearhead of our "scientific culture" focus. In terms of our planning for tourism, that focus has proved to be the most promising in attracting same-day visitors."

It is true that the Space Camp's exhibition, which mainly comprises artifacts and miniatures, had not been updated since its opening, except for the addition of a few features. "However, the space sciences evolve rapidly, and the current exhibition no longer shows where they are today," says Mr. Lemay. It will be possible to continually update the new, 100% virtual experience to be offered at the Space Science Centre to reflect recent changes.

Visitors will be invited to board a video simulator in order to take a virtual trip to a space station. These "space travellers" will be able to find out about the many facets of astronaut life and all the scientific concepts related to it. The exhibit's design is based on a set of modules that include a space station, various exhibits on complementary subjects and interactive educational games. The space station will be made up of 15 different rooms, each offering a different experience and content. Visitors will be able to explore five of these rooms during each visit, which will ensure

they enjoy a unique adventure and will want to come back to the Cosmodôme to see the rest. "What's more, it will be possible for us to offer about a hundred different 'space trips' by setting up the rooms in various combinations." This design's flexibility will also enable the Space Camp to fulfil its educational, scientific and tourism mission in terms of school groups, business clientele and the public at large.

This major project has aroused a great deal of enthusiasm within Cosmodôme management, whose members already see the possibility for making it available on the Web. "Internet users would be able to access a certain number of elements in the exhibition. Since the exhibition itself is virtual, meaning that it is primarily made up of videos, migration to the Web would seem to be the logical next step." Come to that, why not a TV program? The Cosmodôme has already considered the question, which would certainly seem doable in the medium term.

Once work begins, it will take some 18 months to set up the new exhibition. The Cosmodôme, which currently hosts 80,000 visitors annually, expects to triple that number as of the first year of its launch. Ready for liftoff?



To learn more about Space Camp Canada, please contact Josée-Anne Dionne, Sales and Marketing Co-ordinator, at 450 978-3600, extension 3605, or visit the Laval Cosmodôme's Web site at: [www.cosmodome.org](http://www.cosmodome.org).



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## Shan makes its—and its customers—dreams come true

One of the lifelong dreams of Chantal Lévesque, the founder of the Shan Collection, was to become owner of her very own facilities for producing her luxury men's and women's swimwear, resort ready-to-wear, lingerie and co-ordinated accessories. And that is exactly the gift the designer decided to give her team to celebrate the firm's upcoming 25th anniversary. In July 2008, therefore, the company purchased a 2,787-square-metre building combining a warehouse and production facilities to house its 150 employees, an investment of \$3.5 million.

Since its founding in 1985, the company's collections—from first sketch to the stitching of the final seams—have been produced entirely in Laval. This is because Shan insists on controlling every aspect involved in making its garments. "We pay extremely careful attention to every single detail to ensure our products' impeccable quality," explains Jean-François Sigouin, Vice-President. "That demands very close control at every stage of work." It is true that every Shan swimsuit is a small work of art. Only the best fabrics woven in Italian mills are selected after strict examination of the quality of their production and colours. The design of every component of a collection undergoes weeks of refinement to make sure it both flatters the body and is comfortable to wear. Finally, every Shan outfit is sewn by hand to ensure the highest standard of quality. To sum up, everything is done to produce a perfect product.

And Shan designs are meeting with increasing success worldwide. As it wanted to manage its expansion efficiently, in 2006 Shan management felt compelled to decentralize its administration and customer service to Montreal. However, two years later, it was clear that the company's factory space was proving too small to accommodate the continuing growth in orders. Moreover, management felt that the entire staff needed to be gathered under one roof in order to foster the close collaboration among departments necessary for producing a high-quality product. All the conditions were right, then, for Shan to achieve its dream of acquiring its own plant.



Ensnconced at 4390 Laval Autoroute West for a year now, the company is also preparing to make another of its dreams a reality: opening a boutique in the very place where its fashions are created. This fall, therefore, the Centropolis Shan boutique will move to the head office, where customers will be able to find, in addition to the regular line and the previous year's collection at half price, exclusive designs usually reserved for certain international markets. "It will simply be one of the very best places in Québec for finding luxury swimsuits and co-ordinated resort wear in every price range," points out Mr. Sigouin.

Already the owner of four other boutiques—in Montreal, Saint-Sauveur, Toronto and Miami Beach—Shan sees the Laval outlet becoming a real destination, that is, *the* place for finding the perfect swimsuit. "It's one of the reasons why we wanted our new head office located on a main highway," explains Mr. Sigouin. "Ninety-five per cent of swimsuit buyers



plan on their purchase and, on average, spend over an hour in a specialized shop. We want to welcome customers within a warm, relaxed atmosphere where they can take advantage of personalized, professional advice. After all, choosing a swimsuit is never all that easy . . . .”

In addition to its own boutiques, Shan’s collections are available in very select markets at 400 retail outlets in some 20 countries. In fact, exports account for 65% of the company’s revenues. Shan designs can be found in such prestigious chains as Saks Fifth Avenue, Holt Renfrew, Printemps and Harrods. In Russia, Shan is the top luxury swimsuit line. The company is currently looking to dominate in Eastern Europe, where the demand is increasingly high, as well as develop new markets, such as in Ukraine.

Shan also entertains dreams of expanding internationally, with its own boutiques in such world capitals as New York, London and Paris. What’s more, it’s obvious that Shan has the means and the will to make those dreams also come true.

## S H A N

For further information about the Shan Collection, please contact Jean-François Sigouin, Vice-President, at 450 687-7101 or [info@shan.ca](mailto:info@shan.ca), or by visiting the company’s Web site at: [www.shan.ca](http://www.shan.ca).



## Another record year

Laval's major economic sectors delivered impressive results in terms of investments in 2008. The residential sector led the way, with the industrial sector following close behind, once again confirming Laval's ability to attract investors. A number of local firms invested in expansion and in upgrading their production technology in order to remain competitive. In 2008, Laval companies were responsible for 80% of all investments in the area's industrial sector.

### The residential sector exceeds all expectations

A total of 3,675 housing units were built in Laval in 2008, a 27.5% increase over the 2,883 units that went up in 2007. With investments valued at \$746.5 million, this represents a 20-year record.

For the first time in many years, multi-family dwellings occupied top spot in the 2008 Laval residential construction market with 2,098 units, 57.1% of all such new buildings. This can be explained by the starts on a number of major construction projects, particularly in the area around the Montmorency Métro station. Seven projects alone, each involving more than 100 units, accounted for 74% of all the multi-family dwellings built.



### TOTAL INVESTMENTS, CITY OF LAVAL, 2008

Sectors	Investments	%	Comments
Industrial	\$676,270,880	39.8%	826 projects
Commercial	\$164,412,533	9.7%	314 projects
Institutional	\$114,866,428	6.7%	50 projects
Residential	\$746,549,370	43.8%	3,036 permits issued
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,702,099,211</b>	<b>100%</b>	





### Industrial investments are up 8.3%

With investments totalling \$676,270,880, Laval's industrial sector experienced a banner year. This exceptional performance, fuelled by major investments in expansion initiatives, training, equipment, production technology and R & D, clearly indicates local companies' determination to innovate, create new products and maintain or enhance their competitiveness to support their growth. It comes as no surprise that BIOPOLE companies devote the most resources to R&D. Above and beyond these major investments, Laval's drawing power continues to be such that it attracts new industrial companies to its strategic centres of excellence every year.

Accordingly, in 2008, 22 new companies set up operations in Laval. Furthermore, a number of new construction or expansion projects were announced during the year and, with the purchase of land in the area's municipal or private industrial parks, took their first steps towards realization.

### The commercial sector: Growing suparegional influence

Laval's commercial sector continues to expand its commercial arteries, neighbourhood shopping areas, and local and regional centres. The city's commercial offering taps into a suparegional market that continues to grow. This is reflected in the investments made in this sector, which is the largest employer in Laval, providing close to 30,000 jobs. With \$160.7 million in investments, 2007 was an excellent year, while 2008 bettered even that performance with investments of \$164.4 million, a 2.3% increase.

### The institutional sector: Investments rise by 20%

Investments in the institutional sector were evaluated at \$114.9 million in 2008, compared to \$95.7 million in 2007, an increase of 20%. The year 2008 marked the end of the investments made to bring the Métro to Laval, since these included the additional \$12 million earmarked for the construction of the underground pedestrian walkway at the Cartier station.



## BREAKDOWN OF TECHNOPOLITAN INVESTMENTS AND NEW JOBS, BY SECTOR, CITY OF LAVAL, 2008

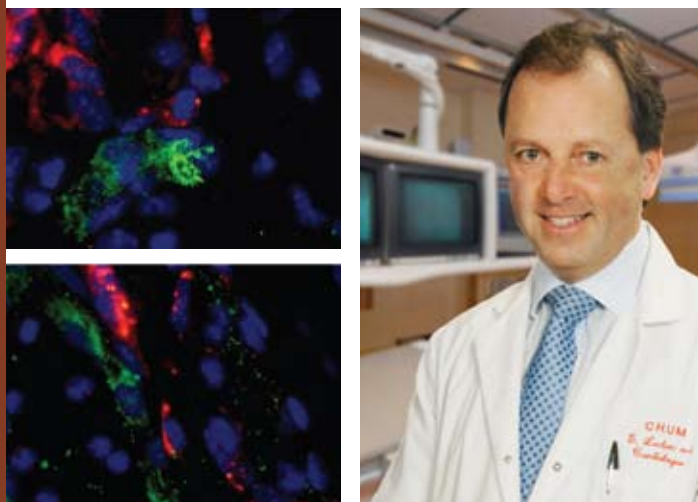
Sectors	Investments	% region	No. of jobs	% region
AGROPOLE	\$44M	6.5%	393	15.9%
BIOPOLE	\$315.3M	46.6%	155	6.3%
e-POLE	\$80.5M	12%	473	19.2%
INDUSTRIAL POLE	\$190M	28%	1,330	53.9%
Tourism	\$11M	1.6%	67	2.7%
Real estate	\$35.4M	5.3%	49	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$676.2M</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,467</b>	<b>100%</b>



## Stem cells are at the heart of a post-heart attack therapy

AccelLAB, a company specializing in preclinical contract research for the biotechnology, medical device and pharmaceutical industries, recently received a contract from the Toronto company Covalon to conduct in vivo testing of the effectiveness of genetically modified stem cells in treating cardiac diseases. In operation since 2004 under the helm of interventional cardiologist Dr. Guy Leclerc, AccelLAB did not have all the equipment required to complete such an ambitious research study at its Boisbriand facilities. It therefore created a satellite laboratory within the business incubator of the Québec Biotechnology Innovation Centre (QBIC), located in Laval's Biotech City.

Photograph: Julien Faugère, julienfaugere@videotron.ca



Right: Dr. Guy Leclerc, President of AccelLAB.

Left: Mesenchymal stem cells seen through a microscope.

"The QBIC is the ideal environment for this type of advanced research," declares Dr. Leclerc. "It provides access to heavy equipment like centrifuges and high performance liquid chromatographs (HPLCs), which enabled us to avoid having to make a huge investment in order to carry out this key research." He adds that Laval is attracting an increasing amount of research in the biomedical field, not only because of its technological amenities, but also due to its large pool of expertise.

The research project Covalon entrusted to AccelLAB certainly requires highly specialized investigators. Dr. Leclerc and his team of seven must demonstrate on a swine model the effectiveness of genetically modified mesenchymal stem cells injected into the myocardium following a infarction, or what is usually called a

heart attack. "Even though it is relatively recent, transplanting stem cells into the cardiac muscle is not a new therapy," explains Dr. Leclerc. "What is new in this case is the genetic modification, which is supposed to lend added value to the stem cell." This added value is particularly reflected in the cell's angiogenic potential, that is, its power to produce new blood vessels that will irrigate the cardiac muscle. Moreover, such transplanting should enable a considerable decrease in the risk of cell death, the phenomenon responsible for infarction.

Dr. Leclerc considers that "the new therapy to be developed will allow us to improve patients' condition by about 10%, which is huge in terms of cardiology." However, five to seven years of development and clinical study will be necessary before it can be marketed.

Nonetheless, in a few years, patients who have suffered a heart attack could take advantage of a mesenchymal stem cell transplant that could help regenerate their cardiac muscle. These cells, which are extracted from the patient's bone marrow, will be modified in the laboratory using an adenovirus, cultivated in order to promote their multiplication, and then injected into the myocardium. They can then work at rebuilding the damaged tissue. Such an intervention, much less invasive and risky than a heart transplant, could well bring about a small revolution in the medical world.

AccelLAB is enthusiastically getting down to work on this new project, whose scale underscores all the operational prowess and expertise the company has gained over the last five years. For their part, AccelLAB's some 55 other employees are carrying out various mandates involving the healing of wounds, the development of implants for the heart, coronary and other, peripheral arteries, and orthopedic and biomaterials research.



For further information about AccelLAB, please contact Dr. Guy Leclerc, President, at 450 781-0471, or visit the company's Web site at: [www.accellab.com](http://www.accellab.com).



## A new way to build homes: The Simple Concept way

Marc A. Bovet, President of Simple Concept, long dreamt of developing a simple, environmentally friendly way to build homes that would leave no room for error. After four years of research and development, his team of engineers succeeded in designing BONE Structure™, an innovative, patent-pending concept enabling houses to be built using a lightweight steel structure that can be assembled on-site just about as easily as the pieces of a MECCANO® toy.

The idea behind BONE Structure™ arose from a number of observations. "The way we build houses here in Canada has not changed very much over the last century. Their structures are always made of wood which, in addition to warping, rots. The result is that our homes are less sturdy and quickly deteriorate," asserts Mr. Bovet. The lightweight steel frame that Simple Concept has developed, on the other hand, is much more appropriate for Canada's climate and topography.

Moreover, this lightweight steel construction system is so precise that an exact inventory of every material needed can be determined right down to a single screw. Designed using a 3D modelling software and cut using a technology similar to that employed in the aerospace industry, the individual pieces of a BONE Structure™ frame are set up and assembled on-site, all firmly anchored to a concrete foundation. There's no need for saws, levels, nails or planes. Everything is already planned and measured down to the millimetre, even the holes for pipes and wiring. Each component of the home—the corrugated metal panels used for walls, windows, interior surfaces and exterior cladding, and so on—is then attached or screwed onto the structure. "We have stressed precision throughout to prevent any mistakes during assembly. There's no possibility of messing up, since each piece has its exact place within the structure as a whole," explains Mr. Bovet, the main mastermind behind BONE Structure™.

The building method developed by Simple Concept is not limited to the structure alone. Once it is up, polyurethane foam made from soya and recycled materials is sprayed on and spread over it evenly to insulate the home. "It's a green product that has really proven itself," points out Mr. Bovet. Moreover, no waste is produced or left on the site, and Simple Concept buildings and construction methods comply with the LEED Canada certification program and Novoclimat performance standards.

Other interesting features of this building system include its optimization of space (the most is made of every square inch of the interior, even under the roof), flexibility (since no supporting walls are needed, any section of the home can be changed at will) and speed of construction. In fact, it takes 30% less time to put up a home with BONE Structure™ than it does using traditional



Left: A premachined Bone Structure frame set up on-site.

Right: A front view of a home built using Bone Structure.

construction methods. "That's a great benefit for customers, but also for general contractors, because it enables them to cope with the shortage of skilled labour," emphasizes Mr. Bovet.

Launched a year ago, BONE Structure™ has quickly become popular. Some 15 homes have already been built using the Simple Concept method. Six licensees—architectural firms and general contractors—have also seized the opportunity to become standard-bearers for this concept, which guarantees quality construction and workmanship to a degree unprecedented in the residential field. "However, the Simple Concept method also comprises a customer service philosophy," adds Mr. Bovet. "Our licensees have been trained in this respect and they take the time to explain the process to their customers. Their workers make the most efficient use of their time on the building site and keep it clean. We want our work to meet the highest quality standards so that we deliver a premium product."

During the next few months, Simple Concept will be busy introducing BONE Structure™ and its building methods to other licensees not only in Québec, but also in the rest of Canada and abroad. Contractors in both Alberta and France have already indicated their enthusiasm for the concept. For BONE Structure™ is certainly an exportable product, since it can be easily adapted to any type of environment.



To learn more about Simple Concept, please contact Marc A. Bovet, President, at 450 978-0602, or visit the company's Web site: [www.simple-concept.ca](http://www.simple-concept.ca).



## CIMA+: Engineering human resources

The engineering firm CIMA+, whose head office is located in Laval, ranks 5th on the 50 Best Employers in Canada list, which makes it the first Québec company to achieve such a feat since the beginning of this annual study, launched 10 years ago by Hewitt & Associates.

For president Kazimir Olechnowicz, several reasons explain the incredible commitment of CIMA+ employees that has led to this distinction. "First, it has to be said that the company is owned by the organization's key people, which represents around a hundred partners. We take on 15 new partners every year. These people therefore feel directly affected by the company's performance, since they own a part of it." Dynamic employees who excel in their work and demonstrate initiative have a chance of becoming partners in 7 to 10 years. This CIMA+ policy has a dual objective: to motivate staff and promote their retention.

CIMA+ has also established a culture of talent within its organization. The company puts value on each employee's strengths instead of stressing the overcoming of weaknesses, and then puts together teams in which members can use their talents in complement with those of their colleagues. "For example, if a person prefers to work on design rather than project management, we will assign the kind of duties that will make him or her feel valued. Employees who are happy in their jobs give the very best of themselves," points out Mr. Olechnowicz.

Another crucial element in CIMA+'s human resources management strategy is trust. The concept of hierarchy does not exist within this company. People work in teams, each with the right mix of highly experienced and more junior employees, that are empowered to define their own duties, responsibilities and schedules in respect to the challenges that each member would like to handle. "The best investment an employer can make is to put its trust in its employees," declares Mr. Olechnowicz. "Ninety-nine per cent of the time, employees will prove that trust was not misplaced."

The company also invests in its staff's quality of life. If employees enjoy good working conditions, they will generally appreciate their employer more, which will make them more productive. That, in turn,

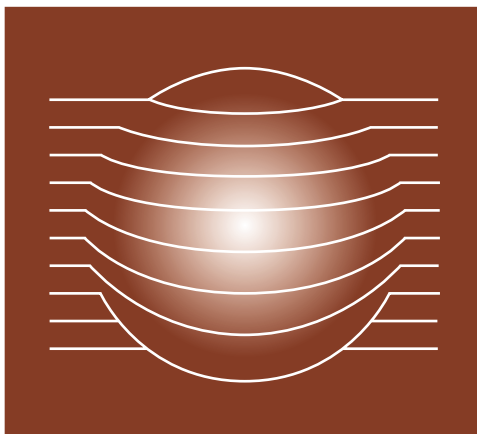
will lead more customers to give their business to the company. The latter will then generate more profit, which can then, as part of a continuous process, be put back into improving working conditions. The company also conducts an employee survey each year that indicates what needs to be strengthened or improved. In 2008, for example, CIMA+ upgraded its employees' benefits program by providing free dental care and raising its contribution to the company pension fund.

CIMA+ now has 1,500 employees. Notably as a result of its innovative human resources development program and its proven management methods—the company also belongs to the select club of Canada's 50 Best Managed Companies—it has doubled its workforce in less than four years. "I think our employees are very proud of having contributed to the development of a company recognized both within its own field and the business community as a whole," comments Mr. Olechnowicz. The next challenge for CIMA+: occupying the top spot on the list within the next five years.

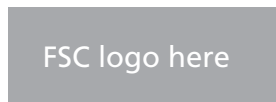
However, challenges do not only arise in the management area. Present throughout Québec and in the rest of Canada, CIMA+ is increasingly expanding internationally, among other places in Nigeria, Niger and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where it has satellite offices. In Algeria, it is working with SNC-Lavalin on the world's biggest construction site, on a project to build a highway that will span the entire country from east to west and cost a total of \$15 billion.



For further information about CIMA+, please contact Kazimir Olechnowicz, President, at 514 337-2462, or visit the company's Web site: [www.cima.ca](http://www.cima.ca).



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