



LAVAL TECHNOPOLE

E C O N O M I C N E W S L E T T E R

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The Growth Challenge program: A new approach for Laval's economic development

Gilles Vaillancourt, Mayor of Laval, and Pierre Desroches, President of LAVAL TECHNOPOLE, have introduced the Growth Challenge program.

Calling it a major shift, Mr. Desroches explained that the Growth Challenge consists of a redeployment of staff within a perspective of providing support services to Laval businesses and spurring and maintaining the city's economic growth.

"We view the Growth Challenge as an evolution that will see us prepare for the future by increasingly focusing our efforts on supporting the development of local businesses," he stated. "Why are we taking this step now? Because it is clear that Laval has attained sufficient critical mass in many major industrial sectors and that the city's economic health is becoming more and more dependent on the growth of its companies.

"Of course, we will continue to attract investments to our region," he continued, "but we will devote a great deal of energy to supporting and serving companies already established here to help them in their efforts to reach their full potential."

In 2008, LAVAL TECHNOPOLE will place an even greater focus on customer service by developing, as an initial approach, three broad service components: international, entrepreneur, and a real estate development. The number of service components will increase over time and according to the needs of Laval businesses.

In addition to its own initiatives, LAVAL TECHNOPOLE will maximize the service offerings of all of Laval's economic development partners. The governments of Canada and Quebec are two such important partners. The Growth Challenge program will help businesses to make better use of the programs available to them.

LAVAL TECHNOPOLE has also announced that, as part of the Growth Challenge, it will increase its staff to better respond to the needs of local businesses.

GROWTH CHALLENGE

To learn more about the Growth Challenge program, please contact Pierre Desroches, President of LAVAL TECHNOPOLE, at 450 978-5959, or visit LAVAL TECHNOPOLE's Web site: www.lavaltechnopole.com.



LAVAL TECHNOPOLE International Business Centre: A new tool for economic development

An extension and natural evolution of LAVAL TECHNOPOLE EXPORT, as well as a unique tool created as part of the new Growth Challenge program, the LAVAL TECHNOPOLE International Business Centre (LTIBC) brings together all of the services associated with global business development.

The LTIBC covers four areas: export, international procurement, international marketing and innovation.

The Centre has been created both for companies already active on the global market and for those with plans to access this market, whether for exporting or international procurement. The Centre's sole focus is to raise the profile of Laval's companies abroad. To this end, it works closely with the following partners: the Ministère du Développement économique, de l'Innovation et de l'Exportation, Export Development Canada, Investissement Québec, Canada Economic Development, the Business Development Bank of Canada, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, the Québec Department of International Relations, the Canada Research Council and the Centre de recherche industrielle du Québec.

"A full 75% of Laval's manufacturing companies do business internationally, either through exporting or procurement," explained Pierre Desroches, President of LAVAL TECHNOPOLE. "This truly represents a channel of growth for Laval. We therefore see our international efforts becoming increasingly focused on our own companies in the future."

Beginning in 2008, the LTIBC will launch a second international development phase, primarily in the United States, Mexico and South America. These networks will be developed to help Laval businesses grow. LAVAL TECHNOPOLE has already signed 17 collaboration, exchange and commercialization agreements with science and high technology parks around the world.

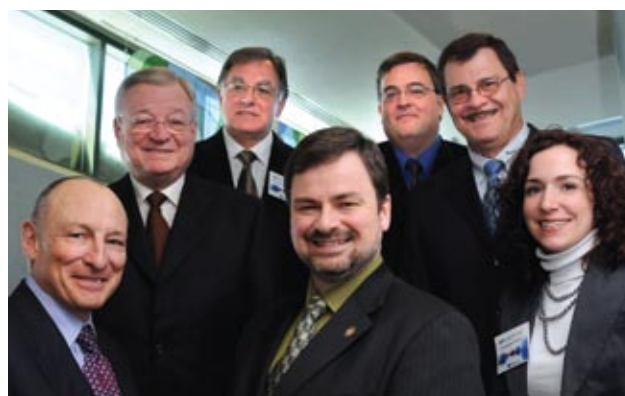
The LTIBC's services will notably include an international business reference and information centre; specialized market training programs featuring meetings with buyers; access to recognized, LTIBC-recommended experts; practical training sessions (laws, customs, regulatory issues, constraints, networks, etc.); and trade missions. In addition, beginning this year, the LTIBC will publish a service guide.

The federal and provincial governments offer numerous programs that support international business development. The LTIBC will guide businesses in benefiting from all of the financial solutions available to them and all of the government resources dedicated to developing international trade. The LTIBC does not manage funding programs nor is it a subsidizing agency, but it can point businesses in the right direction to ensure they reap full benefit from the programs that already exist.



LAVAL TECHNOPOLE INTERNATIONAL
BUSINESS CENTRE

For more information about the LAVAL TECHNOPOLE International Business Centre, please contact Véronique Proulx, Director, at 450 978-6507, or visit LAVAL TECHNOPOLE's Web site: www.lavaltechnopole.com.



From left to right – Front row: François Bouilhac, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministère du Développement économique, de l'Innovation et de l'Exportation du Québec; Alain Paquet, Member of the Québec National Assembly for Laval-des-Rapides and Chairman of the Québec Public Finance Commission; Véronique Proulx, Director, LAVAL TECHNOPOLE International Business Centre. 2nd row: Gilles Vaillancourt, Mayor of Laval; Damien Cloutier, Director of Operations, Laval Local Development Centre. 3rd row: Pierre Desroches, President, LAVAL TECHNOPOLE; Gilbert LeBlanc, Industrial Commissioner and INDUSTRIAL POLE Director, LAVAL TECHNOPOLE.



Biolactis protects a major discovery

Technologie Biolactis has recently filed a patent application to protect its major discovery in the field of immune system regulation using MPM (malleable protein matrix) compounds, a range of bioactive ingredients developed by the company's research team. These compounds could eventually put a halt to the development of many diseases and conditions, including rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis, obesity, eczema, psoriasis, type 2 diabetes and hypertension.

In order to understand Biolactis' discovery and how MPM compounds act, you should know that the main function of white blood cells is to defend the body against attacks from germs, viruses, and so on. They are, in a way, the linchpins of the immune system. When people cut themselves, for example, white blood cells multiply and go into action to defend the injured area. While the white blood cells go about their job, an inflammation breaks out. In fact, all the body's organs and tissues react in the same way once white blood cells get down to work. This reaction is known as the "inflammatory state."

However, sometimes the immune system is out of balance and the white blood cells go into action for no reason, in the end attacking healthy cells as if they were infected. An example of this occurs in Crohn's disease, in which white blood cells attack the intestines, which results in a chronic state of inflammation. In the case of multiple sclerosis, the immune system destroys the protective covering of nerve fibres; in the case of obesity, it is fat cells that are in an inflammatory state.

The new patent will cover the MPM compounds' two mechanisms for helping reduce inflammation while at the same stimulating the body's natural defences through the regulation of Th17 cells. This "rebalances" the immune system. The research that Biolactis has conducted in collaboration with the Institut national de la recherche scientifique (INRS) over the past five years has enabled a study of the body's various responses as it metabolizes MPM compounds. "MPMs act at the source of the problem in a natural way. Their concentrated active ingredients, which are the product of a fermentation process exclusive to Biolactis, act in synergy on the metabolic pathways linked to the immune system and inflammatory problems. By doing this, they can reduce obesity-related complications like high blood pressure and cholesterol levels," explains Éric Simard, Vice-President of Operations.

This new patent will be added to Biolactis' four others, thanks to which the company has been able to develop a whole range of products formulated from MPM compounds. These products can be taken in capsule form or incorporated into food, which can then complement or replace the medication usually associated with inflammatory problems. "Some people have

already added products like Glucolactis, Cardiolactis and Immunolactis to their diet, and some very promising health benefits have been observed," points out Mr. Simard. "Two people with type 2 diabetes have even stabilized their blood sugar levels since they began taking Glucolactis!"

Clinical trials are currently being conducted in Germany on a fruit drink and yogurt with bioactive ingredients developed by Biolactis. This study will end in 2008, following which these products will be marketed as having scientifically demonstrated health benefits. This biotechnology company expects to complete a \$20 million financing plan this year and is also in talks with potential international partners interested in obtaining licences for Biolactis products and incorporating them into food. That would mean a wider number of consumers would be able to benefit from them!



To learn more about Technologie Biolactis, please contact Éric Simard, Vice-President of Operations, at 450 781-1253, extension 2304, or visit the company's Web site: www.biolactis.com.



Apparatus used in Biolactis' exclusive whey fermentation process.



The many facets of Roche Diagnostics' plan for health

Last December 5, Roche Diagnostics began work on the expansion of its Canadian head office, adding 2,437 square metres to the building, which has been renovated at the same time. This major project, to be fully completed this summer, represents an investment of \$20 million.

In 1989, Roche Diagnostics was one of the first organizations to set itself up in Laval's Science and High Technology Park, which has since become the City of Biotechnology and Human Health of Metropolitan Montreal. The reasons that led it to choose Laval at that time are still true today: "The size of our lot would enable us to manage the amount of growth we wanted to achieve. Our location's proximity to major highways and fast access to Montreal-Pierre Elliott Trudeau Airport were also advantages. However, it was mainly the availability of a skilled workforce that motivated our decision," recalls Michèle Beaubien, Senior Director, Government and Corporate Affairs.

Aware of the labour shortage currently plaguing a number of sectors, Roche Diagnostics has taken advantage of the expansion to both invest in the quality of life of its human resources and reassert its commitment to health. For example, it will set up a gym where its 250 employees will be able to work out. "We have instituted several staff retention measures," points out Ms. Beaubien, "of which one of the most appreciated remains flexible summer working hours."

Roche Diagnostics' offices will also be welcoming new employees during the next few years. Customer service, training and technical support for the in vitro diagnostic solutions developed and marketed by the company are just some of its growth departments.

These solutions, particularly reactive products and devices, are designed to screen for, diagnose and monitor certain diseases. Roche's innovations come in various types. Some of them allow integrated automation of laboratory services, while others enable early detection of certain viruses. This is the case for its HIV, hepatitis C and West Nile virus PCR tests. Still others have proven to provide effective solutions for healthcare systems by speeding up diagnostic times. For example, the NT-proBNP test for patients presenting shortness of breath enables it to be

determined whether they are suffering from heart failure or a pulmonary disease. Products developed by Roche Diagnostics also allow more exact diagnoses, as its new HPV tests demonstrate. These enable the detection of the human papilloma virus and its sub-types that are responsible for cervical cancer. Finally, other Roche Diagnostics solutions are aimed directly at patients. Examples of these are the CoaguChek and AccuChek systems, which allow people to monitor their anticoagulant and blood sugar levels themselves, rather than visit a medical laboratory.

Thanks to these kinds of breakthroughs in the field of healthcare, Roche Diagnostics, a division of Hoffman-La Roche with a presence in 150 countries around the world, garnered sales of 9.3 billion Swiss francs (approximately the same amount in Canadian dollars) in 2007.



For more information about Roche Diagnostics Canada, please contact Michèle Beaubien, Senior Director, Government and Corporate Affairs, at 450 686-5500, or visit the company's Web site: www.rochediagnostics.ca.



Pâtisserie Le Fraisier: A growing family business

Pâtisserie Le Fraisier, which specializes in the production of fresh pizzas, recently expanded the size of its plant from 1,115 to 1,860 square metres, as well as purchased semi-industrial equipment intended to standardize the quality of its products and facilitate their handling. In total, these improvements represent an investment of \$1.2 million.

The history of Pâtisserie Le Fraisier is inextricably linked to that of the Amine family. In 1981, Elarbi Amine and his wife set up a small neighbourhood bakeshop in the East End of Montreal. Little by little, the establishment gained a wider market and began to serve a number of prestigious customers, including downtown hotels and restaurants. The company moved its operations to Laval in 1985, meeting with such a warm welcome from locals that a second outlet was opened.

A few years later, with word of mouth working its wonders, Mr. Amine found the doors of several neighbourhood merchants opening to him. Demand soon grew and led the company to distribute its fresh pizzas and sauces to the shelves of supermarkets—at first, local, then in the surrounding area and, finally, throughout the province. “The success of our rectangular pizzas is due in part to their freshness,” explains Mr. Amine. “We make our products according to the orders we receive so as to ensure that they will be on grocery store counters in less than 24 hours. They have a shelf life of six days; we could increase it, but we really want our pizzas to maintain the authentic flavour that has made their reputation.”

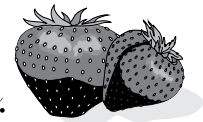
Pâtisserie Le Fraisier has devoted itself exclusively to the wholesale trade since 1998. Moreover, just as the company has evolved, the Amine family has grown: the three children are now involved in the business. Its 25 employees, who will soon increase to 30, are also part of the family adventure.

Even though the company’s succession is assured, Mr. Amine still has a host of plans for Le Fraisier. The recent expansion is, in fact, only the first in a series. During the coming months, therefore, the company will focus on strengthening the marketing of its 100% whole-wheat pizza dough, as well as its pizza canapés, the first product of its kind in Québec. As Mr. Amine points out:

“We have always tried to offer different products, while at the same time stay in line with trends and changes in taste.” For example, the tomatoes Le Fraisier uses are imported directly from Italy in order to give their pizzas a typically Mediterranean flavour. Their special seasonings are also part of the recipe for the success that the company’s products have enjoyed among consumers.

In the coming year, Pâtisserie Le Fraisier plans on tempting the Ontario market. Last year’s investments will enable the company to accommodate the increase in production. “And, who knows? Perhaps, in a few years, our products will be found in a number of international markets . . .,” muses Mr. Amine. He is sure that the company’s solid foundations, the expertise acquired in managing its expansion and the support of his three children will enable him to take on even more ambitious projects.

Le Fraisier Inc.



To learn more about Pâtisserie Le Fraisier, please contact Elarbi Amine, President, at 450 661-3405, or visit the company’s Web site: www.lefraisier.com.





National Bank Gold for Scimega Research

Last September, Scimega Research was the winner of the Laval/Northern and Western Québec regional Gold award in the Small Business category of the National Bank of Canada's SME Awards, a program that recognizes the outstanding achievements of the Bank's business clients throughout Québec. Winners are selected on the basis of criteria such as excellence in planning, human resources, operational and financial management, marketing and networking.

Scimega is the only company in Canada that specializes in conducting clinical studies for biotechnology and pharmaceutical firms developing oncological compounds. It offers services ranging from the design of patient recruitment strategies to data analysis and comprehensive management of clinical trials.

"The development of anticancer molecules represents 25% of all molecular research."

Founded in 1997 by Denise Deakin and Andrée Marceau, Scimega Research marked its 10th anniversary in 2007, a year devoted to consolidating its success. "The development of anticancer molecules represents 25% of all molecular research. We expect an increase in this figure, since the pharmaceutical industry is demonstrating growing interest in this type of research, given the rise in the incidence of cancer within our aging population. Scimega Research has therefore prepared itself for growth in the demand for its services, which will have to become more and more specialized," points out Denise Deakin, President.

The company, which currently has 15 employees, has therefore equipped itself with an infrastructure that is comparable to that of much larger firms. Among other initiatives, it has developed evaluation grids for its staff and each of its services, created a quality control department and incorporated management tools that enable increased productivity. "We will now be able to manage our growth effectively without compromising our performance, the integrity of our services, or our reputation," assures Ms. Deakin.

This smart business strategy earned Scimega Research its regional Gold award, enabling it to pit itself against the six other companies that were finalists in the province-wide competition.

It should be noted that another Laval firm, Aqua Rehab, received the Bronze award in the SME category. Congratulations to both for their stellar showing!

**Scimega**
RESEARCH
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To learn more about Scimega Research, please contact Denise Deakin, President, at 450 629-2200, or visit the company's Web site: www.scimega.com.



It's full steam ahead for Vaptec

In addition to representing a very major investment, the November 2006 move of Vaptec's facilities from Pointe-Claire to Laval necessitated obtaining a number of certifications from a variety of organizations in the U.S. and Québec. Today, the company is a Canada-wide supplier of design, sales, repair and consultancy services in the complex field of steam-heating system components and valve assemblies for pressure installations, as well as, in collaboration with engineering firms, the development of steam networks.

Founded in 1988, the company had been considering the expansion of its facilities for some time when it moved into a 930-square-metre building in Laval in 2006. However, transferring the operations of a company in Vaptec's line of business from one place to another is never easy, especially since each step requires tight co-ordination. It not only had to move its inventory, but also see to the assembly of its model steam-heating system (boiler, piping, valves and fittings, controls, etc.) in the new location, as well as undergo the round of certifications.

In respect to pressure vessels, Vaptec must ensure that it complies with the Régie du bâtiment du Québec's regulations, which follow the ASME (American Society of Mechanical Engineers) International Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code. "Vaptec's new steam-heating system therefore had to be certified by the two organizations," explains Tyler Gratton,

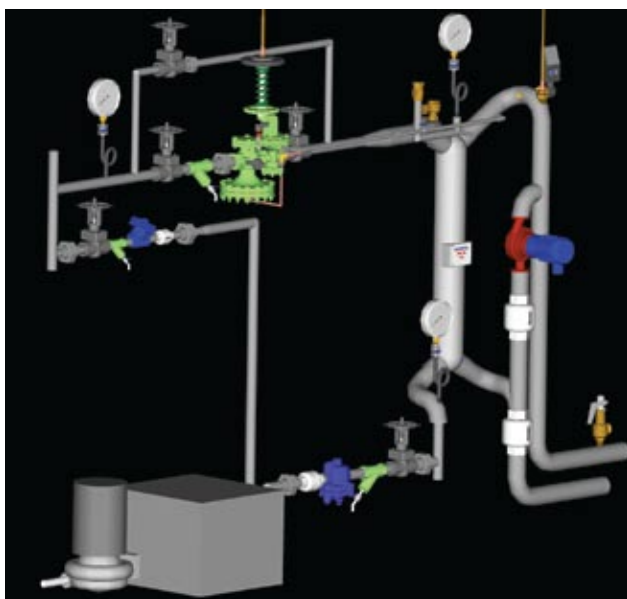
Vice-President. "Moreover, our network and quality control system must also be certified every three and five years by the NBBI (National Board of Boiler and Pressure Vessel Inspectors), which is the body that establishes safety regulations for steam networks. User safety depends upon these certifications, so they are extremely important."

The company was also looking to set itself up in an area where it could count on establishing new business relationships. Since steam and valve networks are mainly employed in institutional heating systems and industrial processes, Vaptec works closely with plumbing companies, a major number of which are located close by in the Industrial Park Centre near Highway 440. "As the main users of our products are hospitals, food processing companies, heating plants and other institutions located in the Greater Montreal area and elsewhere in Québec and Canada, Laval's strategic location was a major factor in our decision to establish ourselves here," adds Mr. Gratton.

Since its move, Vaptec has made sure to leverage its location to the maximum. It continues to supply its products and services throughout the country, and maintains a sizeable inventory in order to minimize delivery times. It is also developing both generic and customized components such as regulators, steam traps, heat exchangers and safety relief valves. In addition, the company is in the process of providing its retailers across the province with expert training, since the advisory services that accompany the sale of such products demand highly specialized knowledge.

Vaptec's plans for its long-term growth include diversifying its Canadian markets, exploring new markets abroad, increasing its sales, creating new jobs to add to its current roster of positions, and ensuring the continuous improvement of company expertise.

3-D view of a steam network.



VAPTEC
<http://www.vaptec.ca>

For more information about Équipements de vapeur industrielle Vaptec, please contact Tyler Gratton, Vice-President, at 450 686-0390, or visit the company's Web site: www.vaptec.ca.



Solid investments for Jean-Pierre Robert Steel

A scant four years since its original move from Prévost, Jean-Pierre Robert Steel has again chosen Laval for its operations. The company recently acquired a 3,715-square-metre, industrial-type building at a cost of close to \$2.5 million. Although the firm's administrative offices have already been set up at the new location, the plant area needs to be renovated. The building's official inauguration will therefore take place in the fall of 2008.

According to Jean-Marc Doucet, President, given the limits of its size and configuration, the former plant no longer met the company's needs. "Great demand from our customers has meant rapid growth for us. Fortunately," continues Mr. Doucet, "even though few companies use such a variety of machinery in their operations as we do—for example, overhead cranes for moving heavy objects—we were able to find a suitable plant in one of Laval's industrial districts."

Jean-Pierre Robert Steel specializes in the design, manufacture and assembly of steel structures on construction sites, mainly in the commercial, industrial and institutional sectors. In business since 1979, the company has experienced strong growth since its 2004 acquisition by a group of investors led by Mr. Doucet, who began a major restructuring of its business. In just two years, company practices, in terms of overall management as well as production and sales, were completely re-engineered.

In 2006, the company's revenues reached more than \$6 million, a 200% increase. As Mr. Doucet notes: "Our five-year plan sets out achieving \$10 million in sales before 2010, and we are now well on the way to surpassing that."

In addition to increasing its earnings, Jean-Pierre Robert Steel intends to create between 15 and 20 new positions during the next year. The predicted labour shortage does not seem to affect the company at the moment, but the decision to remain in Laval was due, over and above the issue of the availability of a plant that would meet its needs, to the fact that the majority of its employees live in Laval or in the near vicinity.

Moving the plant therefore enabled increased production at a still more competitive cost. An immediate result of increased sales is that those employees to be hired in the coming months will allow the company to set up a second shift. In order to achieve its objectives for growth and increased production capacity, the company will make the very latest digital technology, whether in machine tools or other equipment, available to plant personnel.

"Our major customers abroad have noted all the potential of the new plant. Knowing that we now have the capacity to meet the demand, some of them have invited us to bid on \$5 to \$10 million projects, something that would have been unthinkable with the old plant," points out Mr. Doucet.

Exports will unquestionably be on the agenda at Jean-Pierre Robert Steel in 2008, since its already international clientele continues to become more diverse, with orders coming from such varied markets as Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Thailand, Nigeria and Angola. "Obviously, neither will we neglect markets like the United States, Mexico and Central America, where many of our customers are based," concludes Mr. Doucet.



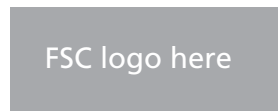
For more information about Jean-Pierre Robert Steel, please contact Jean-Marc Doucet, President, at 450 629-0044, or visit the company's Web site: www.jprobot.ca.



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