



LAVAL TECHNOPOLE

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The City of Biotechnology and Human Health of Metropolitan Montreal enters into two co-operation agreements with Spain

Last July, the City of Biotechnology and Human Health of Metropolitan Montreal formalized co-operation and exchange agreements with two of Spain's most important science parks in terms of biotechnologies, those of the University of Barcelona and the Autonomous Region of Madrid.

Overall, the first agreement is intended to foster exchanges between the research centres and companies of Barcelona and The Biotech City. It rounds out the agreement that has bound the Québec Biotechnology Innovation Centre and the Bioincubator of the *Parc Científic de Barcelona* since October 2003, under which the two entities promote the establishment of business links between incubator companies. From now on, the special relationship that links the Montreal metropolitan area and Catalonia will encompass all exchanges promoting innovation in the biotechnology sector, from the sharing of best practices in terms of regional development to working together on large-scale international projects of interest to both.

The second agreement sets out the terms and conditions for co-operation between the *Parque Científico de Madrid* and The Biotech City. This pact, which will be in effect for two years, provides for the deployment of common actions to promote and publicize worldwide the initiatives undertaken by each partner in the areas of innovation and regional development. This is a major strategic agreement for The Biotech City, as the cluster in the Autonomous Region of Madrid has more than 400 companies generating some 24,000 jobs in the life sciences field. Therefore,



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this co-operation agreement holds out extremely attractive prospects in terms of potential results.

These agreements, like the approximately 20 others linking The Biotech City and LAVAL TECHNOPOLE with technology parks around the world, as well as with regions of economic interest, aim, on the one hand, to position Laval as an international centre of excellence. Such recognition fosters the establishment of partnerships and facilitates networking for Laval companies wishing to export their expertise. On the other hand, such agreements can make a direct contribution to increasing the top line for Laval businesses by making it easier for them to establish links with other companies.

The formula has already proven itself. Thanks to an agreement signed between LAVAL TECHNOPOLE and the Sophia-Antipolis Technology Park, a Laval company, HLP Group, was able to set up a subsidiary in Valbonne, a city located in the Alpes-Maritimes region of southern France. It is just one example from among hundreds, all of which contribute to Laval companies' economic strength.

Following these agreements, the next stage will entail creating business networks from which companies on both sides of the Atlantic can benefit. The first step toward this will be taken during the 14th edition of the BioContact symposium, to be held in Quebec City in October, which will be attended by representatives of 1,200 companies from around the globe. The Biotech City has organized a daylong tour of Laval companies for a delegation from some ten Madrid firms.

In the meantime, major effort will be devoted to developing partnerships in the United States, since more than 80% of the Laval companies that export target the American market.

Within the boundaries of The Biotech City, born of a partnership between the INRS (Québec's Institute for Scientific Research), LAVAL TECHNOPOLE and the City of Laval, and whose nerve centre is the Laval Science and High Technology Park, can be found a top-notch university institution (INRS – Institut Armand-Frappier), a specialized hospital, clinical and preclinical research centres, the Biological Research Centre, the Biotechnology Development Centre and major companies, including international leaders in the biotechnology and pharmaceutical fields. More than 90 companies specializing in the life sciences and related services are located within the park and its surrounding area.

For more information about The Biotech City's agreements with the *Parc Científic de Barcelona* and the Autonomous Region of Madrid, please contact Pierre Desroches, Chairman of the Board, at 450 681-0003, or visit The Biotech City's Web site: www.citebiotech.com.

Transbec continues to expand

Although located in Laval for barely a year and a half, Transbec has already begun to expand its warehouse from 9,290 to 15,050 square metres in size. This expansion, work on which started in September, will be completed in February 2008. It represents a total investment of \$3 million for the company.

Transbec decided to go ahead with the expansion in order to be able to keep a larger inventory of the auto parts and accessories that it markets under the Atlas, Chassis Pro, Edge and Aeroflex brand names. This will enable the company to ensure supply for its clientele, meet the growing demand from its new markets and focus even more on building its export business.

The expansion of the warehouse, which is located on a 36,510-square-metre lot, is also intended to foster efficient management of the firm's non-stop growth. "We currently have 75 employees and we will create 10 new jobs in the short term," states the president and founder of Transbec, Pierre Deaudelin. Furthermore, we plan on hiring more personnel in the mid term, since future acquisitions are a part of our action plan."

In fact, Transbec's latest project to date has been the purchase of a company specializing in performance accessories such as tires and rims. Always on the lookout for new products to round out its product line, Transbec will be launching a rack system and water pump this fall.



Monarch Specialties packs up its furniture... and moves to Laval

A brand-new, 200,000-square-foot building on Highway 13 will soon be home to furniture manufacturer and importer Monarch Specialties. The new site will consolidate the company's head office and warehouse operations, currently conducted in three different locations, all under one roof. Although construction on the new building only began last May, the move will be complete on October 1.

As a company that sells its products to furniture retailers located throughout Canada, among them such giants as Leon's, The Brick and Rona, as well as in the U.S., Laval's central location and proximity to major road and other transportation networks was a prime factor in the final decision to make the substantial investment in building there. As David Berger, President of Monarch Specialties, explains: "Since we are both an importer and manufacturer, we need to be located in an area that enables us to optimize the receiving and shipping of our merchandise—and Laval does just that. Moreover, many of our employees live in or close to Laval, so they have been very pleased about this move."

Furthermore, with a product line that includes over a thousand different SKUs of assembled and ready-to-assemble furniture for virtually every room in the home, and that is growing all the time—lighting fixtures are a recent addition—Monarch Specialties needed a larger distribution centre. "Our new building allows us to have all our merchandise in one location, which greatly facilitates management of inventory and shipping. Plus, our new 600,000-

square-foot lot gives us plenty of room for future expansion," states Mr. Berger. The growth in warehouse operations will also bring about the creation of 20 to 25 new jobs.

A privately owned family business founded by the current president's father, Wilbur Berger, in January 1950, Monarch Specialties began in the mirror and glass industry, and later branched out into the manufacture of wood furniture. In keeping with developments in the North American industry, Monarch began importing furniture about 10 years ago.

This proved to be a wise move, one that has ensured the company's continuing success. As Mr. Berger declares, "We were there at the right time." Monarch Specialties now has a number of overseas offices and agents, as well as an association with a major U.S. importer, Coaster Company of America, which enable it to continually scour the world for new merchandise to add to its product offering.

For further information about Monarch Specialties, please contact David Berger, President, at 450 628-4488.

Transbec has been in the auto parts distribution business for more than 30 years. A Canadian pioneer in terms of importing, this multinational has distinguished itself by making quality products available to more than 3,000 customers, in the majority garage owners.

To learn more about Transbec, please contact Pierre Daudelin, President, at 450 665-4440, or visit the company's Web site: www.transbec.ca.





Diffusions Joanel makes a major shift... to green

Construction is underway in Laval on a green building for Diffusions Joanel that uses geothermal energy for heating and air conditioning. Founded and located in Laval since 1992, this handbag and leather accessory design company will move its head office into this building in November. It has invested \$2 million in the project and, in doing so, becomes the first business in the area to turn to this type of environmentally friendly energy. The new 1,860-square-metre building, which incorporates a heritage home, includes design studios, showrooms and warehouse space.

Johanne Boivin, Diffusions Joanel president and designer, was already very conscious of the importance of protecting the environment before embarking on this major project: "We had already implemented strict pro-environment standards within the company in terms of packaging, recycling of materials and consumption. The purchase of the lot at the intersection of Dagenais Boulevard and Highway 15 provided us with a wonderful opportunity to do even more in this line. There is a major cost involved in setting up this type of system, but our subsequent energy expenses will drop considerably."

The Diffusions Joanel move constitutes another step in the company's plans for expansion. It has experienced strong growth over the last years, in particular due to its partnership with the Cirque du Soleil, under which the company creates exclusive handbag collections for the Cirque's ongoing Las Vegas shows, the launch of the Edgar & Sooky line of pet accessories, and its forays into the gift and U.S. duty-free markets. Indeed, its exports to the United States now represent 20% of its total sales.

Les Diffusions Joanel today has more than 600 clients. Offering a choice of over 300 original styles in leather, synthetic or fashion trend materials, the company sells more than 250,000 handbags a year. In 2005, sales leaped 47%, while 2006 saw growth of 35%.

During the next few months, Les Diffusions Joanel expects to increase its staff by approximately 30% through the creation of 5 to 10 new jobs. Of course, the search for new retail outlets for its products—to add to the ranks of Naturalizer, FXLasalle, Yellow, Feet First, Globo, Browns, and others—remains at the top of the agenda.

For further information about Les Diffusions Joanel, please contact Johanne Boivin, President and Designer, at 450 681-0070, or visit the company's Web site: www.joanel.ca.



J O A N E L[®]





And then there was light... in Laval

Canarm, a manufacturer of lighting systems and ventilation equipment for the industrial, residential and agricultural sectors, is making a \$5 million investment in moving its distribution centre from Anjou to Laval. The groundbreaking ceremony marking the beginning of construction on Canarm's new facility took place on October 11, with the company's executives present. Construction is expected to be completed in January 2008.

The company's growth has prompted this move. "Because of the lack of space there, expanding our facilities in Anjou simply became impossible," states the distribution centre's manager, Joan Picard. "In Laval, on the other hand, we will be able to effectively manage our long-term expansion." The new, 9,290-square-metre warehouse is currently being built on a 27,870-square-metre lot in the Highway 25 park, and Canarm's 25 distribution centre employees will begin working there as of January 2008.

"Given its strategic location and communication routes, Laval will also enable us to supply our Canadian Tire, Rona and Wal-Mart customers throughout the country, as well as Potvin-Bouchard in the Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean region, specialized stores and other retailers, whether they are located in Québec, Ontario, the Maritimes or the West. Moreover, our new location will allow us to move into new markets in the U.S., to which we already export a portion of our production," explains Ms. Picard.

Canarm, an Ontario-based company whose head office is located in Brockville, has six manufacturing plants in Ontario and one in Illinois, in addition to the Greater Montreal area distribution centre, which warehouses the company's products and co-ordinates distribution to Canadian and U.S. retailers. Established in Montreal since 1934, the company then operated under the Canadian Armature Works Corporation name. Its merger with Danor in 1980 led to the creation of Canarm.

Joan Picard declares that she is extremely pleased that the company has decided to invest in Québec rather than concentrate all its operations in Ontario: "It is a real sign of confidence in and recognition of our expertise."

To find out more about Canarm's distribution centre, please contact Joan Picard, Manager, at 514 353-2255, or visit the company's Web site: www.canarm.com.





Groupe Dijon becomes bigger... to clean better

Just some three years after the construction of its headquarters, Groupe Dijon, a Groupe Urgence Sinistre partner, had to expand. From the 2,325 square metres that contained its offices, storage and work areas, the company now enjoys a full 3,716 square metres of space. Work on this project, which involved an investment of \$1.4 million, was completed in August.

The building's expansion was aimed not only at reorganizing the company's office space, but also managing the growth envisaged in its business plan. "We want to take advantage of this opportunity to improve our operations in such a way as to be more efficient," emphasizes Maxime Blanchette, President of Groupe Dijon. "At the same time, we will be trying to develop our market in the northern ring of the Greater Montreal area as much as possible. We expect to create 10 to 15 new jobs within the next year."

In fact, the pool of population in the northern suburban ring offers the company, which is the biggest area player in its particular field of expertise, excellent potential for growth. Its 1998 establishment in Laval was motivated by two major factors: firstly, its market niche had been relatively little exploited; secondly, its main clients, insurance companies, preferred to use local professionals.

In the mid term, Mr. Blanchette has a number of other projects in mind for the company: "We would like to launch several new, specialized services, such as the drying out of buildings, cleaning of ventilation ducts, and creation of temporary housing for disaster victims. We would then be able to hire more employees."

Groupe Dijon cleans and restores structures damaged by fire, soot, water, vandalism or other causes. It has a team of 60 employees dedicated to the cleaning of rugs and furniture, transport and storage, neutralizing odours, and repairing electronic and computer systems. It also offers a dry-cleaning service.



To learn more about Groupe Dijon, please contact Maxime Blanchette, President, at 450 622-5522, or visit Groupe Urgence Sinistre's Web site: www.gus.qc.ca.





OKIOK Data secures its growth

Last June, OKIOK Data inaugurated its new office location in Laval's Centropolis complex. Thanks to an investment of close to \$0.3 million, OKIOK, the largest Québec firm dedicated solely to information security, expanded its space from 185 to 465 square metres in a measure to support its planned growth.

From 2003 to 2007, OKIOK's annual earnings practically doubled, while the number of its employees increased by close to 50%, to now stand at 45. "The agreements we have signed with Beta Systems and Siemens have contributed to the company's wide-ranging influence," explains Cindy Walsh, OKIOK's vice-president of finance and operations. In 2005 and 2006 these two globally active German firms respectively purchased Focal Point (a single sign-on authentication solution) and Global Trust (an identity management tool), two flagship products developed by OKIOK, a fact that has significantly strengthened top of mind for the company.

Armed with this international experience, OKIOK wishes to build on its momentum by developing new markets and exporting its expertise. Its next step? To acquire companies that could fill out its current service offering, which would enable it to achieve \$40 million in sales within the next five years.

Basing the new head office in Laval is a response to today's labour market trends, as well as part of OKIOK's personnel retention strategy. "Since our new offices are situated in the northern ring of the Greater Montreal area, our staff will continue to benefit from a location that fosters work-family life balance. In fact, we believe being able to offer our employees an enhanced quality of life is proof of our success and long-term prospects," underlines Ms. Walsh.

OKIOK is a privately held company that has focussed exclusively on the design, implementation and management of information security systems since 1983. It offers its own software solutions or customizes systems to enable companies to comply with legal requirements in terms of governance and information protection. Its expertise has enabled it to provide a wide array of professional services, ranging from risk analysis, training and product evaluation to the installation of advanced solutions. Hydro-Québec, Loto-Québec and the National Bank of Canada are just a few of its North American clients. OKIOK solutions are also used in Europe by KONE and SI2M, as well as by KBC, the result of a partnership with IBM.

To learn more about OKIOK Data, please contact Cindy Walsh, Vice-President, Finance and Operations, at 450 681-1681, or visit the company's Web site: www.okiok.qc.ca.

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Dumoulin concentrates its operations in Laval

Dumoulin, whose head office has been located in Laval since 1994, is moving its warehouse there from Saint-Léonard, and at the same time expanding its facilities to a total of 5,110 square metres in area, up from 2,785 and 1,115 square metres for, respectively, its former warehouse and office space. The construction of the new building, which was begun this fall, as well as the refit of the office area, represent an investment of \$2 million.

"This new warehouse will enable us to increase our efficiency in terms of logistics," explains François Lefebvre, Vice-President, Communications and Corporate Affairs at Dumoulin. "As the new building will be next to our offices, communicating with employees and managing inventory will become much easier."

The advantages of this reorganization, however, are not limited to physical proximity alone. For example, over and above automation, the building's structure and layout have been designed to minimize stock handling as much as possible. This both facilitates warehouse employees' work and increases their safety.

"The building also accommodates the latest technology. To give you another example, today's flat-screen TVs are much thinner, but also more fragile, than traditional models, and require special handling and storage facilities," points out Mr. Lefebvre.

Laval was the logical choice for Dumoulin: not only do its highways offer easy access to the whole of the Québec market, as well as that of the rest of Canada, but also its lower new construction-related costs (price of land, municipal taxes, and so on) provided a major incentive tipping the scales in favour of the city.

The investment in these facilities is yet another part of Dumoulin's ongoing plans for expansion. The company opens new corporate and franchise stores at the rate of four to five per year. Under the Dumoulin banner in Québec and the Audiotronic name in the rest of Canada, it now has close to 115 retail outlets located coast to coast.



To find out more about Dumoulin, please contact François Lefebvre, Vice-President, Communications and Corporate Affairs, at 450 963-1855, extension 121, or visit the company's Web site: www.dumoulin.com.



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