

Montréal in Action

Volume 3, No. 8 – October 2008



Quebecor invests \$800 M in wireless

Over the next 4 years, Quebecor will be investing \$800 M to \$1 G in its new wireless network. This investment will allow the firm to

build its own HSPA (High Speed Packet Access) network. It expects to launch its wireless network within the next year and a half. Quebecor estimates that the introduction of this network will create 1,000 jobs.

\$360 M in investment for Pratt & Whitney

Pratt & Whitney Canada will be investing over \$360 M in R&D in the Montréal region over the next three years. The subsidiary of United Technologies, an American firm, is to receive \$125 M from the Quebec government over the same period. According to the company, the investment will be aimed at further improving engine technology.

Montréal among the world's university elite

Montréal has once again distinguished itself as a city of knowledge, as two of its universities are rated among the world's best. *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, a British publication, ranks McGill University in the top 20 and Université de Montréal in the top 100.

Avanquest opens a subsidiary in Montréal

French software publisher Avanquest Software has announced that it is opening a Canadian subsidiary in Montréal, a move expected to create 100 engineering jobs over the next three years. The R&D centre comes on top of Avanquest's facilities in France, the United States and China.

Social economy generates \$2 G annually in Montréal

According to a statistical portrait of Montréal's social economy published by the Conférence des élus de Montréal and the UQAM Canada Research Chair in the Social Economy, the social economy generates \$2 G in revenue annually and accounts for 60,000 direct jobs in 3,590 establishments.

Merck Frosst: Montréal avoids the worst

Pharmaceutical giant Merck Frosst has made major cuts, laying off 7,200 workers around the globe and closing three of its seven research centres. The job cuts also affect Montréal, but to a lesser extent, since some of the operations at the research centres that are to be closed in other cities will be transferred to Montréal.



Montréal real-estate market holding up

Despite the financial crisis shaking global stock markets, the Montréal real-estate market held steady in the third quarter, with

average increases of 4.8% for single-family homes, 0.5% for two-storey homes and 4.4% for condominiums, according to a Royal LePage study.

Office space scarcer than ever before

According to a study published by GVA Devencore, the downtown office vacancy rate has hit a record low. The study shows that Class "A" buildings downtown currently have an occupancy rate of over 95%. According to Devencore, in view of this scarcity, a developer could announce the construction of a new building within the next 6 to 8 months.

Saputo buys the CIBC Tower for over \$100 M

The Saputo family and its partners, the Mach and Pétra groups, have bought the CIBC Tower, one of the city's tallest skyscrapers.

Cominar acquires 2001 McGill College

Cominar Real Estate Investment Trust has acquired the building located at 2001 McGill College for \$165 M.

507 Côte de la Place-D'Armes sold

One of Montréal's oldest skyscrapers has been bought by Georges Marciano, of California, founder of Guess Jeans, for \$22 M.



AMT: \$168 M project in Pointe-Saint-Charles

The Agence métropolitaine de transport (AMT) plans to use half the old CN railyard property in Pointe-Saint-Charles, in southwest Montréal, to build a modern maintenance centre for its locomotives and passenger cars, at an estimated cost of \$168 M. At the request of the Sud-Ouest borough, the Ville de Montréal Executive Committee has mandated the Office de consultation publique de Montréal to hold a public consultation and come up with a common vision for the future of this vast property. The first information session was held on October 22. A document outlining the outcome of this exceptional consultation process is to be released in December.

Quebec invests an additional \$155 M in public transit

Quebec will be freeing up an additional \$155 M to enhance public transit service in the Montréal region. These funds will allow the Agence métropolitaine de transport to add 80 new departures a week on the Deux-Montagnes, Dorion-Rigaud, Saint-Hilaire and Delson-Candiac suburban train lines.

Standard & Poor's maintains Montréal's A+ credit rating

Standard & Poor's decision is based on Montréal's solid economic performance in 2007, a healthy surplus after capital spending and ample liquidity. The firm predicts that if Montréal continues in this vein and if it further reduces its debt, it could see its credit rating go even higher.

Montréal to host the Fed Cup

Tennis Canada has announced that the round-robin tournament for Americas Zone Group I will be held at the Uniprix Stadium from February 4 to 7, 2009. The tournament will feature players from the Bahamas, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Paraguay, Puerto Rico and Venezuela, who will be competing for a single berth in the World Group II qualifying round next April.

Isabelle Hudon to head Marketel

Advertising firm Marketel has announced the appointment of Isabelle Hudon as its new President. Ms. Hudon had been President and CEO of the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montréal since October 2004.

Work progressing on projects and construction sites

► Bellechasse neighbourhood: project launched

A project to revitalize the Bellechasse neighbourhood, in the Rosemont La Petite-Patrie borough, has been officially launched. An on-line discussion forum is open and an urban workshop will be organized in November to collect development proposals. A partner committee has been formed to ensure the entire community supports the project.

► Canadian Broadcasting Corporation real-estate development project passes another hurdle

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) real-estate development project is to be submitted to City Council for approval. This is one of the phases that this huge real-estate project must go through before it is built. Once it has received the green light from the city, it will go to the Office de consultation publique de Montréal. The CBC hopes to break ground before the end of 2009. The project calls for some \$1.6 G in investment and is expected to generate \$40 M in property taxes for the city.

► MUHC: Request for Proposals issued

The MUHC authorities issued the Request for Proposals on October 16. Over the next 35 weeks, representatives from the two consortia in the running, Groupe immobilier santé McGill and Partenariat CUSM, will attend some 200 working and consultation meetings along with close to 200 MUHC staff members. According to the timetable for redeveloping the future MUHC, the consortia are to submit their final bids by November 2009. Work on the \$1.1 G construction project is slated to begin the following spring, with delivery of the Glen Campus provisionally scheduled for fall 2013.

► Inauguration of Place Norman-Bethune

Place Norman-Bethune, newly created by the Ville de Montréal, was inaugurated on October 15, along with a newly restored statue of the acclaimed physician. The event coincided with the 80th anniversary of Norman Bethune's arrival in Montréal, where he worked as a chest surgeon at the Royal Victoria Hospital. The city invested \$3 M in upgrading the intersection of rue Guy and boulevard de Maisonneuve.