

PRESS RELEASE

**For immediate release
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Investing in the Continuity of Québec Companies to Support Québec Economic Development and Shape our Destiny

Montréal, March 27, 2009 – The 8th Annual General Meeting of Capital régional et coopératif Desjardins was held today at the Montréal Convention Centre. André Lachapelle, Chairman of the Board of the Company, stated that in spite of particularly challenging economic times in 2008, Capital régional et coopératif Desjardins continued to deploy all its resources to fulfill its mission of economic development. Mr. Lachapelle extended his heartfelt thanks to the 122,000 shareholders whose investments help drive the Québec economy.

During fiscal 2008, Capital régional undertook new commitments totalling \$65 million, including \$18 million in the resource regions and cooperatives. Total commitments amounted to \$477 million in 213 partner companies, cooperatives and funds contributing to the retention of 30,000 direct jobs and thousands of indirect jobs.

Louis L. Roquet, President and COO of Desjardins Venture Capital, the Company's manager, explained the strategies put in place to confront economic conditions that appear unlikely to improve anytime during the upcoming year. "Our teams continued to put their talent and creativity to work for Québec entrepreneurs by helping them not only to weather this difficult period, but also to seal the deal on growth projects or map out a solid future through successful business transfers."

Continuity of Québec businesses

In 2008, Capital régional et coopératif Desjardins carried out 23 transfer transactions for businesses, 4 of which were transferred to family members, 9 to outside buyers and 10 to executives. Transfers to managers already heavily involved in driving an organization's performance are gaining in popularity with both vendors and investors.

"Since 2005, we have closed 69 business transfer transactions, which is a source of great pride for me. I'm a great believer in the importance of proper succession planning. It's not the type of decision you should make over a few weeks. It's a long-term project that requires a great deal of support. Our teams have the expertise to prepare specially designed financial packages to offer entrepreneurs a smooth transfer, while moving forward with development and value-enhancing initiatives for their business," added Mr. Roquet.

In order to keep ownership of Québec companies in the regions they were founded in, Capital régional also partners with existing management teams for company buyouts. The strategy serves to bridge the generation gap between entrepreneurs preparing to hand over the reins and up-and-coming business people who do not necessarily have the financial means to take on a going concern.

In 2008, Desjardins partnered with the management team of Boutique Le Pentagone in the Rimouski area for a buyout. The transaction made it possible for the company's founders to step down while safeguarding their assets and for the current management team to take the helm. The founding entrepreneurs, Charles Albert and Jean-Guy Ouellet, are delighted with this turn of events. "What we spent 30 years building is going to live on in our region and elsewhere with a solid, dynamic team that has the skills to develop Boutique Le Pentagone. Besides the financing package, we're particularly pleased with the respect Desjardins has shown for our corporate culture. Our management style has always focused on people. It's crucial to respect all of these pioneers because without them, none of this would've been possible."

Creating employee shareholder cooperatives (ESC): an innovative wealth sharing tool

In 2007, Capital régional announced its partnership with Fempro's management team in connection with a buyout. Thanks to that transaction, the business and jobs stayed in the Drummondville area. This partnership produced results in 2008, as the company's growth took off. In addition, its employees are now members of an employee shareholder cooperative or ESC. "Conditions were conducive thanks to our employees' motivation, strong sense of attachment and confidence, cultivated by our management philosophy focusing on a people-first culture, mutual respect and openness. An ESC was a logical continuation," stated Jean Fleury, General Manager of Fempro.

This ESC is a sterling example of how to bring a community together and proves that Desjardins can play a crucial role in implementing cooperatives in Québec.

Capital régional et coopératif Desjardins

Founded in 2001, Capital régional et coopératif Desjardins is a publicly traded company managed by Desjardins Venture Capital. With over 122,000 shareholders, the Company contributes to Québec's economic development while driving the growth of cooperatives and the resource regions. Capital régional et coopératif Desjardins currently supports more than 200 companies and cooperatives in various industries spanning all Québec regions. (capitalregional.com)

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