

**Monique Leroux addresses the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal
Companies, like cities, must take action to thrive in a changing world**

Montreal, September 30, 2015 – In her speech today presented to the Montreal Board of Trade, Monique F. Leroux, Desjardins Group Chair of the Board, President and CEO, said: “We are living in a world of unprecedented change, the likes of which we’ve rarely if ever experienced before. This accelerated pace of transformation affects every sector of activity. The challenge for companies and cities alike is to innovate and stay relevant.”

She illustrated her point by talking about the changes that financial institutions have undergone in recent decades, starting with the first ATMs in 1980. “Financial institutions took the lead. They introduced new ways of doing business. And what an innovation it was at the time! 35 years later, we see consumers boldly riding the digital wave, abandoning ATMs, handling cash less and less. And they expect us to always come up with new ways to simplify their lives.”

With the digital revolution comes a growing number of Internet giants and stars from Silicon Valley that also offer financial services. As a result, Ms. Leroux believes Desjardins has a duty to develop mobility and proximity solutions to meet the needs of its members and clients. That was also the theme of the recent Desjardins Group congress.

“We’ve set clear innovation and investment priorities to support our members and clients in this fast-changing world of ours,” she explained. She acknowledged too that mobile services and new technology cannot replace the human relationship: “a strong relationship with our members and our clients that we intend to build on.”

“It’s what motivated our investment in new spaces, new types of caisses and new client contact centres,” she said, recalling the recent opening of a new service centre at Marché Central, as well as the 360d centres for 18-30 year olds, near the Université de Montréal, Concordia and UQAM campuses.

Montreal on the world stage

If Desjardins has a duty to look to the future, to innovate to better serve present and future members and clients, Ms. Leroux suggests it applies to Montreal as well. The city needs development strategies so it can take its rightful place not only in Quebec but also on the world stage.

She announced the position of the Advisory Committee on the Future of Montreal, which she chaired at the request of Montreal Mayor Denis Coderre.

The Committee selected four strategic action areas that “...in our view should be at the heart of a vision for Montreal, a city open to the world,” she said. They are:

- Montreal, a city of knowledge and innovation
- Montreal, a city of culture in a digital age
- Montreal, a city of enhanced mobility and public transit
- Montreal, a city of business and a major financial hub

According to Ms. Leroux, active participation by both citizens and business leaders is crucial to the city's future success, as is the case in every major city around the world. She then launched an appeal to the audience, "Montreal must be able to count on us all. We must mobilize our efforts as we prepare for Montreal's 375th anniversary celebrations and contribute to building a prosperous and inclusive metropolis. This involves every one of us. We must all take action so that our businesses, our city and our people continue to grow and glow with pride in this ever-changing world. It's up to all of us to create the future!"

About Desjardins Group

[Desjardins Group](#) is the leading cooperative financial group in Canada and the fifth largest cooperative financial group in the world with assets of close to \$251 billion. It has been rated one of the 50 Best Employers in Canada by Aon Hewitt. To meet the diverse needs of its members and clients, Desjardins offers a full range of products and services to individuals and businesses through its extensive distribution network, online platforms and subsidiaries across Canada. Considered North America's strongest bank according to Bloomberg News, Desjardins has one of the highest capital ratios and [credit ratings](#) in the industry.

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For further information (*media inquiries only*):

André Chapleau

Public Relations

514-281-7229 or 1-866-866-7000, ext. 5557229

media@desjardins.com