



FRANCIS VACHON THE GAZETTE  
Michel Mazziade is CEO of NeuroCité, a \$250-million group of labs to be built over the next two years.

## NueroCité should create jobs, attract pharma companies

### \$250M PROJECT

#### University/industrial complex planned

QUEBEC – It's a project that aims to attract the world's brightest and most promising brain researchers here and could one day provide crucial breakthroughs in the treatment of some of humankind's most prevalent neurological disorders.

But in strictly economic terms, the \$250-million NeuroCité will also have a far-reaching impact on the fortunes of the city.

The project involves the construction of a world-class university/industrial complex that will specialize in neuron, brain, and brain-disease research.

It is the inspiration of Dr. Michel Mazziade, a Université Laval-trained physician and the founder and scientific director of the university's research centre at the Robert-Giffard psychiatric hospital in the city's east end.

The project aims to attract 10 pharmaceutical companies and an equal number of high-tech firms here by 2017.

Quebec Health Minister Philippe Couillard gave it the official go-ahead in June, opening the way to efforts to raise venture capital.

Mazziade envisions 2,000 high-paid researchers working in a dozen buildings with integrated residential and commercial functions.

They will be seeking new therapies and treatment for Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, depression, schizophrenia and other brain disorders.

"We want to accelerate research in the field, which has really been neglected until now (despite the fact) related medications are a \$300-billion market," Mazziade said.

Quebec is the perfect location for such a project, he added, because of the presence of several existing life-science research centres, and because the region has a relatively old, socially and religiously homogeneous population that provides what Mazziade calls "a great genetic granary."

At the same time, the project will create many openings for Canadian researchers who might otherwise leave to find work elsewhere. "We're not just going to be looking to help prevent and treat brain illnesses," Mazziade said. "We're going to help stop the brain drain."

MARK CARDWELL

# 'Its totally hot to be an anglophone here now'

## EARNING MORE

### Lack of bilingual staff a growing problem

QUEBEC – When she was a teenager growing up in Quebec City in the 1970s, Helen Walling said that she and most of her friends took for granted that, despite speaking French fluently, they couldn't write or read the language well enough to attend the city's only university, French-speaking Université Laval.

So most left for Montreal or cities outside the province for advanced education.

Unlike most of her friends, however, Walling returned home, and she now realizes how mistaken she and her friends were.

"We never realized how big an asset it is to be a bilingual anglophone here," said the 44-year-old, who is executive director of the Voice of English-speaking Quebec, a non-profit group that provides a wide range of services for the English-speaking community in the capital.

Marcel Bérubé agrees. The president of Groupe Perspective, a human resource company in Quebec City and Montreal, he is also in charge of a committee of the Quebec City Chamber of Commerce that is now trying to solve a problem that affects 26 per cent of companies here – a dearth of bilingual workers who are able to speak English.

"It's a big problem," he said, "and it's getting worse."

According to Bérubé, a recent poll of Quebec City companies found that 26 per cent have difficulty finding bilingual staff. And 18 per cent of companies – including Canadian insurance giant Industrial Alliance, which is headquartered here – say their inability to find and



CLEMENT ALLARD THE GAZETTE  
Helen Walling beside a statue of British General James Wolfe inside Morrin College.

hire bilingual staff is hampering plans to expand to other provinces and to the U.S.

"Opportunities are being missed," he said.

Not surprisingly, the demand for English-speakers here has translated into better pay for bilingual workers.

Bérubé said bilingual staff in the provincial capital region earn an average of nine per cent more than unilingual francophones – 18 per cent more if they speak a third language.

At the same time, the advent of the Internet and the cooling of language tensions have led to a rise in social status for English-speakers here.

"It's not so hush-hush to speak English in public here any more," said Walling, who added that Voice of English Quebec now fields calls daily from francophones looking for opportunities to speak English.

"It's totally hot to be an anglophone here now."

MARK CARDWELL

## CAPITAL A boom without Alberta-size headaches

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"Manufacturing is so small here it's insignificant," said Gordon, who said services, construction, tourism and finance are the key areas of economic activity.

To be sure, Quebec does face some sizable challenges now and in the future, Gordon noted.

The population is aging and a shortage of anglophone workers is hampering expansion in the banking and insurance fields. Competition from other major urban centres or a drop in tourism because of a high Canadian dollar or U.S. worries about crossing the border could crimp growth. So could negative changes – such as a reported 22-per-cent increase in crime this year – in the city's vaunted lifestyle.

"Right now though, things are going very well here," Gordon said. "We're kind of just coasting comfortably."

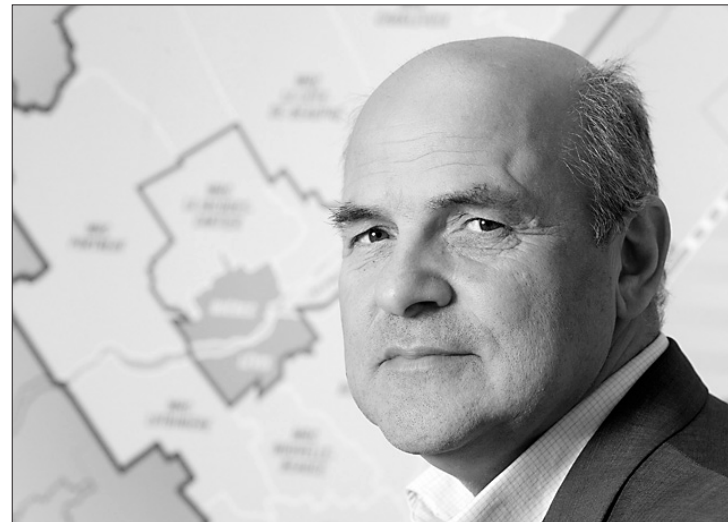
Non-residential building permits have increased here more than in any other Canadian city for two years in a row, according to the Conference Board of Canada.

Recent data from the Institut de la statistique du Québec, which tracks public and private building projects across the province, also show that there will be nearly \$7 billion in construction and equipment invested in this region in 2007 alone – only \$600 million of which is from government.

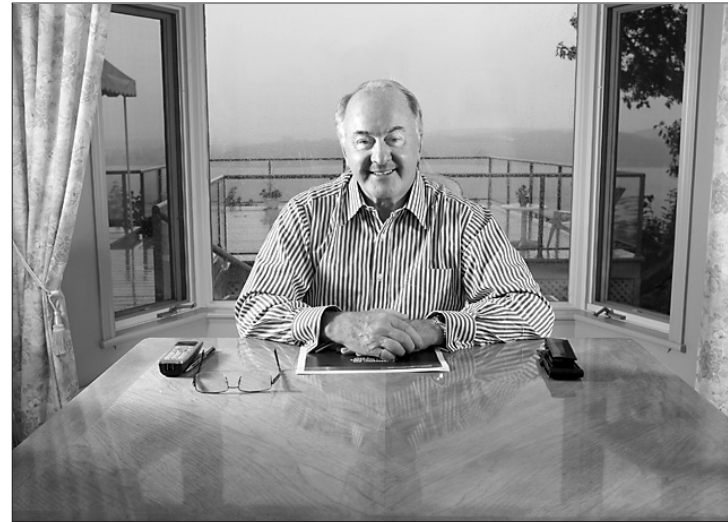
Conference Board figures released in 2006 showed that personal incomes have grown 20 per cent faster here than elsewhere in the province since 2000. Meanwhile, Statistics Canada reports that between 1995 and 2006, unemployment has fallen by more than half, from 11.9 to 5.2 per cent. By comparison, Montreal's jobless rate was 8.4 per cent in 2006.

For 2007, the Conference Board predicts the economy here will continue to perform strongly, registering growth of 2.2 per cent and a net increase of 5,000 jobs.

Unlike Calgary, where the energy-driven boom has also led to social problems such as a housing crunch, Quebec continues to rank among the cheapest and safest major cities in which to



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"Our boom is being driven by brain power," says Paul-Arthur Huot of Pôle Québec Chaudière-Appalaches.



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"Today, people know that high tech can produce products and jobs," says Jean-Guy Paquet, founder and president of INO.

live and run a business in Canada.

In addition to the city's financial and insurance companies, which own a quarter of the city's red-hot commercial real-estate assets, the city's other traditional mainstay – tourism – is basking in its own renaissance of sorts on the eve of the city's 400th anniversary, which will be celebrated throughout 2008.

Last year, Quebec made the top-10 lists of must-see world destinations in travel magazines such as Condé Nast Traveler and National Geographic.

New city parks and the Quebec City Convention Centre, chosen the world's best in 2006 by the In-

ternational Association of Congress Centres, helped to attract 430 conventions and events here last year. That record total will be topped in 2007 thanks to events such as the nTim Hortons national convention, which resulted in 9,000 hotel stays and 31,000 meals served over four days in July.

Business travellers, who make up about 10 per cent of the 9.5 million people who visit Quebec City annually, also are helping keep the city's touted restaurants, boutiques and hotels brimming with customers.

The Quebec Winter Carnival, declared Canada's best winter event by Reader's Digest in its

June issue, remains a big tourist draw.

In recent years, however, new sectors have added a new dimension to Quebec's economy, including life sciences, nutrition, high-tech design in optics, animation and video-game development, and manufacturing of processed wood, plastic and composite materials.

The area is home to a handful of key research centres, including Quebec City's University Hospital Centre, Canada's largest biomedical research facility; DRDC Valcartier, Canada's leading defence research and development centre; and the National Optics Institute, or INO, Canada's largest optics and photonics research centre.

Most were started and are staffed by graduates of the area's many vocational schools, technical colleges, specialized institutes and Université Laval.

The centres have created hundreds of high-paying jobs and generated dozens of spinoff companies.

"Calgary's economic boom is being fuelled by oil and gas, but ours is being driven by brain power," said Huot, who is also chairman of Accord, a provincially backed initiative aimed at mobilizing industrial leaders and their partners in roundtable forums that discuss and evaluate programs and projects in targeted "sectors of excellence."

According to Jean-Guy Paquet, the founder and president of INO, initiatives like Accord reflect a sea change in business mentality in the provincial capital region.

"I remember going to a big economic summit here back in 1983, when people were talking about the need to take a technological turn because we were going to lose jobs and students to Japan," said Paquet, who was then promoting the need to build research parks that would marry pure research and business.

"There was me and one other businessperson at the table and 20 politicians and union people. No one knew what the INO was or what a research park was."

Today, he added, the situation "is totally the opposite. People know now that high tech can produce products and jobs."

## Business pipeline links Quebec and Calgary

### Western office represents 7 firms

QUEBEC – An office opened last month in Calgary by Quebec's business development agency to serve as a beachhead for Quebec businesses in Alberta has already helped land a contract.

**Playground Equipment Jambette**, a 50-employee, Lévis-based manufacturer of institutional playground equipment, signed a \$40,000 deal with a Calgary architectural firm this month – and believes more are in the works.

"It's not a really big job money-wise, but it's a very important deal for our company," said Marie-Noëlle Grenier, one of five owners of the company, which will fill and ship the order from

its plant in Lévis.

"We're really interested in developing the Alberta market."

That's why, Grenier added, she and her partners' firm were quick to join the Quebec Calgary Business Pipeline.

The pilot project evolved from a memorandum of understanding signed last fall by development agencies in both cities to facilitate more business relationships between the cities, which have been officially twinned for more than 50 years.

Set up by Pôle Québec Chaudière-Appalaches in the office of Calgary Economic Development – and opened during Stampede week in Calgary – the office represents seven companies, including Jambette, that share the salary and costs of a local business development manager.

MARK CARDWELL

## Anapharm almost went to Montreal or Toronto

QUEBEC – In the end, Quebec City turned out to be an easy sell for Johane Boucher-Champagne.

Three years ago, the president and CEO of Anapharm, a Quebec-founded pharmaceutical company, was summoned to a meeting at the New Jersey offices of its parent company, **PharmaNet Development Group**.

The meeting was to decide on where to build a new headquarters for Anapharm, a corporate spinoff that had been founded by Dr. Marc Lebel, a Université Laval chemist, in 1994.

Anapharm, which develops early-phase drugs and offers bio-analytical and other laboratory services to the pharmaceutical, biotechnology and generic-drug industries, had been operating in two locations here – a problem that its U.S. owners, a global contract research organization were determined to fix after purchasing the firm in 2002.

"They were thinking about Montreal or Toronto, but I ar-

gued that it should stay in Quebec," Boucher-Champagne recalled. "After all, the company started here, it's a beautiful city with a tremendous quality of life and a skilled work force, and there is a remarkable population of volunteers (for studies). There were many pluses."

In the end, the company decided to stay in Quebec. The result was a new \$25-million, state-of-the-art building that opened in the Parc Technologique de Québec in June. In addition to bringing the company's 550 employees here under one roof, the new building features bigger laboratories, spacious clinical units with 200 beds for study participants, ample parking, and easy access from public transit.

Roughly 20 per cent of the new 150,000-square-foot building remains unoccupied to accommodate 100 new positions the company hopes to fill in the coming months.

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