



L'exclusif

FCCQ Members Newsletter



A WORD FROM THE CEO

Françoise Bertrand



We must redirect public debate on economic stakes

With the recent election of a minority Liberal government, the FCCQ intends to show extreme vigilance and is even more determined to be heard by the government and all members of the National Assembly in order to move economic stakes forward to the national level for a more competitive Quebec, a successful Quebec!

According to an analysis of the election press coverage by Influence Communication, only 5% of the remarks made during the course of the recent campaign were related to the economy. Evidently, economic stakes are not significant enough in public debate, nor are they in electoral ones. This statistic once again confirms the conclusions of a study by NATIONAL, released in the fall of 2006 when the FCCQ came out publicly with the need to get back to a balance in public debates, to media coverage of economic projects and to the urgent need to create an Agency for Economic Analysis.

Since the beginning of the year, the FCCQ has continued to travel throughout Quebec to meet business people and exchange ideas on the different current economic stakes. Among these is again the need to create an Agency for Economic Analysis. The FCCQ will be increasing its efforts tenfold to move ahead with its vision of the Agency in the coming months and will intensify its actions with the Quebec government to bring this project to fruition as quickly as possible.

A mobilized network to reinforce Quebec's competitiveness!

The FCCQ's mission is more pertinent than ever in a difficult economic context, marked with globalization and in which the economic stakes are not sufficiently front and centre of political issues. The FCCQ hopes to reverse this tendency at its next annual convention in Rivière-du-Loup on September 21, 22 and 23, where the event's main theme will be Quebec's competitiveness. The FCCQ expects fruitful exchanges, ones which will bear positive results!

There is no doubt that the FCCQ's strength is not limited to discussions and intentions; the network also gets into the action! This issue of *L'Exclusif* summarizes some of the recent initiatives taken by the FCCQ illustrating the mobilizing activities going on. The FCCQ is proud to be able to count on the support of business people concerned with progress in Quebec in an ever more competitive economic context!

Enjoy the read!

THE FCCQ ADVOCATES THE ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION OF QUEBEC'S RESOURCE REGIONS

The third Colloque *Action régions ressources* of the FCCQ took place in Quebec City last February 21. The event brought together more than 70 members of the network and elected officials from all the resource regions under the theme of economic diversification. The day was marked with conferences and workshops, one just as pertinent as the other, which were given by such highly-skilled professionals as Mr. Mario Carrier, Director of l'École supérieure d'aménagement du territoire et du développement régional de l'Université Laval, Mr. Yvon Boudreau, Consultant, Mrs. Claire V. de la Durantaye, Director of l'Institut de recherche sur les PME and Mr. Hervé Bouchard, acting mayor of Rivière-du-Loup. At lunchtime, guests had the pleasure of attending a conference with Mr. Pierre Simon, President of the Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de Paris.

Following the day's consultations, participants came to some conclusions. For one, they hope that the new government prioritizes the diversification of resource regions and accelerates the implementation of niches of excellence. They also advocate softening regulations on business start ups and upholding the tax advantages granted to resource regions and SME until 2010.

Diversify: a priority!

In its economic vision *For a successful Quebec*, the FCCQ recognizes the support of all regions to increase Quebec's economic competitiveness. The network thus asks the government to make the economic diversification of resource regions a priority by collaborating closely with business people in all resource regions and by counting on the support of major businesses located there. The FCCQ considers that these initiatives must be based on entrepreneurship. According to Françoise Bertrand, "the specialization of resource regions could be costly for them; often one-industry based, they will be called upon to innovate to ensure prosperous economic development and to urge the next generation to settle there and develop new businesses."

Bet on niches of excellence

Other questions were raised at the Colloque, particularly with regard to the niches of excellence. The FCCQ has demanded that their implementation, as well as the confirmation of niches already identified, be accelerated. To do this, the following conditions must be met: improvement of regional research centre financing, adaptation of the professional and technical training offering, development of R & D and the active solicitation of promoters and investors.

Favour softening of regulations

The FCCQ deems it necessary that current regulations on business start ups be softened and better suited to the variable regional realities, economic sectors and business size.

Uphold tax advantages until 2010...

As for tax advantages granted to the resource regions, the FCCQ anticipates that refundable tax credits and tax holidays granted to SME in resource regions will not be changed before the deadline of 2010, and that the new minority Liberal government will announce its intention to renew them soon.

The Colloque was a great success and ended on a high note when the FCCQ had the honour of welcoming Natural Resources and Wildlife Minister, Mr. Pierre Corbeil, at the closing dinner.

2007 Convention: rendez-vous in Rivière-du-Loup!

The FCCQ will hold its Annual Convention on September 21, 22 and 23 of this year at the Hôtel Universel, in Rivière-du-Loup. The theme of the event is "Winning strategies...for a more competitive Quebec." This subject is experiencing growing significance at a time of globalization and coincides perfectly with the network's economic vision in the campaign for competitiveness in all regions of Quebec. The FCCQ will present various workshops relating to this theme with topics on innovation, workforce, training and human resources.

More information will soon be coming from the FCCQ on the convention's development, but until then, all interested business people should enter these dates in their agendas!

For any questions about the convention, please contact Mrs. Marguerite Saubat, Manager, Affiliated Member Services, at 514-844-957, ext. 3226 or Mrs. Charline Lessieux, Affiliated Member Services Assistant, at ext. 3225.





Secrétariat
à la jeunesse

Québec



The Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge is off to a start!

Promoting the freedom to do business is at the core of the FCCQ's mission, which hopes to contribute clearly to the collective development by giving the young the possibility to acquire the abilities and skills required to pursue and reach their entrepreneurial objective. For three years now, at the *Mercuriades Gala*, the FCCQ awards the *Mérite Promotion de l'entrepreneuriat* to a devoted individual who has contributed much to pass on the entrepreneurial spirit to the next generation. Quebec must be able to count on a coming generation of entrepreneurs, and the FCCQ is very involved with young people to show them the many aspects of entrepreneurship. While the FCCQ already benefits from the experience of some of its chambers of commerce involved with the young, the FCCQ is proud to be associated with the Youth Secretariat to manage the Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge program throughout Quebec. What a wonderful challenge!

The Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge program comes within the framework of a government decision centred on the development of a real entrepreneurial culture, and the promotion of the values tied to it, to young people in all regions of Quebec. By counting on the FCCQ's skills and those of its chambers of commerce, the Youth Secretariat is equipped with the appropriate tools to sensitize, inform and stimulate the young to show boldness in pursuing their venture into entrepreneurship and to cultivate their spirit of initiative, sense of leadership, trust in their abilities, creativity and desire for a challenge.

In addition to acting as an intermediary between government and businesses in its network, the FCCQ will have the responsibility of setting up the bases of a system dedicated to information and making the young aware of the program. The FCCQ intends to favour an approach that will induce its network's member entrepreneurs, with their positive brand image, to act as models and promoters of the entrepreneurial culture among the young people of their region. The FCCQ's goal is to solicit the support of at least 60 chambers of commerce for the project, so they can present their model entrepreneurs to us.

Chambers of Commerce and entrepreneurs interested in taking up the Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge should contact Mrs. Diane Dubord, FCCQ Project Manager at 514-844-9571, ext. 3232.

Our Carrefours d'influence are a sure success!

Over the past months, the FCCQ has invited many key figures in the political and business worlds to come and exchange views on competitiveness, productivity and their vision of a winning Quebec with members of its Circle of Partners and Business Forum.

These discussions are privileged moments spent informing decision makers about the various concerns of FCCQ members and nurturing fruitful dialogue with them.



The FCCQ had the honour of welcoming the three leaders of the major political parties, Messrs. Jean Charest, Mario Dumont (accompanied by Mr. Gilles Taillon) and André Boisclair, before the start of the provincial election campaign. Last February, the FCCQ's executive committee and sector-based members of the board of directors met with Mr. Michel Audet, the outgoing Quebec Minister of Finance.



The highlight of March was the visit of Mr. Jean-René Halde, Canada Development Bank President and Chief Executive Officer during which he presented the theme: *Increase competitiveness or disappear*.

The next Crossroads of Influence will take place in May with new Gaz Metro President Sophie Brochu.





After Bill C-257, a new battle is gearing up with Bill C-415

The FCCQ has won a battle, but not the war. In order to publicly vent its disagreement on the adoption of Bill C-257 on workers' recourse for replacements during a strike or lock-out, the FCCQ had presented its arguments before the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social Development and the Status of persons with Disabilities (HUMA) and has written letters to federal members of parliament. According to Françoise Bertrand, FCCQ President and Executive Director, "it appears inconceivable to hold back the proper functioning of our economy by slowing down business operations with federal charters offering basic services. We must stop reinforcing the penalizing constraints of the work force." The FCCQ had combined its efforts with those of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in this matter.

Bill C-257 was rejected at third reading but the FCCQ will be watching Bill C-415 closely which will follow and stipulate the resulting changes to the Canadian Labour Code.



TRADE CORRIDORS

The FCCQ is concerned with cross-border security

On February 26, the FCCQ took part in a meeting organized with its partner from the Quebec-New York corridor, the Plattsburgh-North Country Chamber of Commerce, to discuss the US Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI).

The event was aimed at learning about the concerns of business people as to decisions taken by the United States to increase border security after the September 11, 2001 attacks. These measures put Canada-US relations to the test, and there are direct repercussions on business exchanges. They are even more significant as they are coming to light at a time when economic relations between Canada and the US are changing due to the shock of rapid and sustained growth in China and India. The FCCQ is therefore concerned with this priority stake which imposes many challenges upon the political and business communities.

At this meeting, the FCCQ was able to sound out the opinions of some fifteen decision makers from the tourism industry in order to protect their interests, and those of their members, in discussions with Canadian and American authorities, without compromising the growth of trade between the two countries and harming the tourism industry in Canada. The FCCQ has thus identified five parameters tied to the establishment of a secure and efficient border:

- That the governments and businesses of Canada consider security as a basic dimension of their cross-border security;
- That governments ensure an efficient border and one with the least constraints in order to attract foreign investments;
- That governments invest in the renovation of cross-border and road infrastructures;
- That economic agents, at all levels and in all sectors, be aware of the need to change attitudes and behaviours regarding border management;
- That we continue supporting the development of NAFTA.

The FCCQ and the Plattsburg-North Country Chamber of Commerce will continue making numerous efforts to ease the application of the new initiatives put forth by the governments on both sides of the border, and help to find new ones. In a coming issue of *l'Exclusif*, the FCCQ will inform its members on the steps which will be taken to create a trade corridor between Quebec and the New England states. The FCCQ is currently working to this end with the help of Mrs. France Dionne, Quebec delegate in Boston. To be continued...