

BELL HELICOPTER CALLS BACK 400 EMPLOYEES

Over the past three months, Bell Helicopter Textron has called back 400 of the 500 employees laid off at its Mirabel plant in February. “The economy is slowly picking up and we feel that we should prepare ourselves accordingly,” says Michel Legault, Senior Manager, Business Development. The company recently received an order from the US Army for 24 Bell 407 helicopters, with an option for 26 additional aircraft.

\$14 MILLION TO TRY OUT HYDROGEN-POWERED VEHICLES

As head of a \$14-million public-private partnership, Air Liquide will lead the largest hydrogen-powered-vehicle demonstration project in Canada over the next two years. The trials will take place at the Montréal-Pierre Elliott Trudeau International airport and another Canadian airport to be announced at a later date. An array of hydrogen energy technologies will be tested as well as a fuelling station for various vehicles. The federal and provincial governments will contribute \$4.3 million and \$2.5 million respectively, while Air Liquide will provide \$4 million and 13 other partners, \$7 million.

WYDE SETS UP CANADIAN HEADQUARTERS IN QUÉBEC CITY

Wyde Solutions Canada, a subsidiary of US-based Wyde Corporation, announced that it will establish its Canadian headquarters in Québec City. The company expects to hire some 40 professionals to market Wynsure, an integrated management solution designed primarily for insurance companies. To bolster its expansion in North America, and particularly in Canada, Wyde plans to increase its partnerships with service integrators, who will see to the implementation of its software systems.

MODERNIZING— A WINNING WAY TO STAY IN THE GAME!

Realizing that part of his production could be transferred to another facility, Dare's plant manager in Saint-Lambert took swift action: he came up with an automation plan and convinced his head office to keep production in Québec.



Production at the Dare cookie plant in Saint-Lambert has grown phenomenally since 2003. In the fall of 2006, it reached a peak and the plant had trouble keeping up. So the parent plant in Kitchener, which had some ovens that were not in use, offered to take over part of the Saint-Lambert plant's production.

The Saint-Lambert plant had increased its production by 20%, 25% and even 30% a year. “But to keep up the pace, we still had to do better,” concedes Christian Bossé, Operations Manager. “Our simulations showed that we could achieve the efficiencies we needed if we had more effective packaging equipment. But that meant a large outlay and convincing head office to invest more than half its annual capital budget in our facility, which was no small task.”

Fearing that the future of his plant would be compromised, Bossé contacted Investissement Québec, which helped him develop a nearly \$8-million project to purchase

cutting-edge packaging equipment. “Investissement Québec supported us every step of the way,” says Bossé. “Annie Bréard, our contact in Investissement Québec's Department of the Americas, put us in touch with all the people we needed to get the project off the ground. She also facilitated communication with head office by staying in contact with our executives. That close collaboration really impressed them and showed them the level of support subsidiaries in Québec receive.”

To persuade its head office to approve the project, the Saint-Lambert plant argued that it was the only plant with the know-how for the products targeted by the transfer and that the investment would enable it to reduce its

production costs. However, Investissement Québec's financial support was a determining factor. “The day I was scheduled to make the final pitch, the budget was still an obstacle,” admits Bossé. “Fortunately, that morning, I found out that Investissement Québec was granting us financial assistance. When my executives expressed reluctance again about the amounts to be invested, I was able to tell them that the problem had been solved.”

The Saint-Lambert cookie plant received the green light from its head office. By automating a portion of its operations, the plant has increased its production capacity and cut its costs, which makes it very competitive in comparison with its sister plants. ■

Dare Foods, headquartered in Ontario, employs some 1,300 people and owns seven plants, including two in Québec. Its range of cookies, crackers, candy and fruit snacks are sold throughout North America and in more than 25 countries in Europe and the Far East.

HAVE A LARGE-SCALE PROJECT IN MIND?

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A WORKSHOP FOR SUBSIDIARIES AT THE CONFERENCE OF MONTRÉAL

The 15th International Economic Forum of the Americas/Conference of Montréal is taking place from June 8 to 11 under the theme *Adapting to a New World Order*. Investissement Québec will be participating, with a workshop it has organized in collaboration with the Ministère du Développement économique, de l'Innovation et de l'Exportation—*Investment and Risk Assessment in Difficult Economic Times*—intended specifically for subsidiaries of foreign companies in Québec.

The workshop will be held on June 9 and led by Jacques Daoust, President and Chief Executive Officer of Investissement Québec. All the workshop presentations and discussions will revolve around the following question: How can subsidiaries get through the crisis and work more effectively with their parent company to ensure their sustainability and growth?

The workshop speakers—Linda Lemieux, Director, Game Quality Assurance, VMC Game Labs; Farah Ali, President and Chief Executive Officer, Fujitsu Limited; Gunnar Heldebro, Vice President, Head of R&D for Ericsson AB; and Zin Smati, President and Chief Executive Officer, GDF SUEZ Energy North America—will talk about the challenges that the new world order poses for their business. Their accounts are sure to interest subsidiaries and provide them with food for thought on ways to grow and obtain new mandates from their parent company. The talks will be followed by a discussion period.

About 100 people are expected to turn out for the workshop and are invited to attend the other conference activities taking place throughout the day on June 9.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please write to us at IQexpress@invest-quebec.com.

The Strategic Support for Investment Program (PASI) supports projects costing \$5 million or more* that stand apart for their innovative nature and commercial potential. The program also supports product development projects costing at least \$2 million.

The program offers three financial products:

1. loan guarantees;
2. interest-free loans;
3. non-repayable contributions.

Businesses in various sectors, including software publishing, tourism and manufacturing, can benefit from PASI. The Dare cookie plant in Saint-Lambert is a good example of what the program can help a company achieve. With the program's support, the

plant managed to convince its parent company to approve its automation project; it was able to modernize its packaging equipment, which was outdated and standing in the way of its growth.

The new equipment enabled the plant to prevent part of its production from being transferred to another facility. The Saint-Lambert plant was also able to position itself advantageously in comparison with the group's other plants by increasing its production capacity and cutting costs. And one of the program objectives was also achieved, namely, to ensure the sustainability of subsidiaries in Québec by helping them carry out projects that allow them to become more competitive. ■

For more information: www.IQfiliales.com

* Capital expenditures or increase in payroll.

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TEAM
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WE'RE HERE TO SIMPLIFY YOUR LIFE

Investissement Québec has a team of 11 experts devoted entirely to international subsidiaries located in Québec and who act as facilitators. They have in-depth knowledge of the programs and organizations that may be of interest to subsidiaries and can thus direct subsidiaries to the appropriate resources for their needs. They can also help them position themselves favourably vis-à-vis their parent company in the case of an investment project.

That's what Annie Bréard, Director, Subsidiaries, did for the Dare cookie plant in Saint-Lambert. "In the winter of 2007, Christian Bossé, Plant Operations Manager, called me to discuss his intention to modernize one of the packaging lines," recalls Bréard. "This investment was needed in order for the plant to maintain its production and secure its future. I told him about the Strategic Support for Investment Program (PASI) we administer on behalf of the Québec government."

Shortly thereafter, Bossé called Investissement Québec again. He wanted to find out what kind of financial assistance was available to him so that he could present his parent company with a sound case for the project. "Dare is a family-owned business that's used to

financing its own projects, without taking out loans," explains Bréard. "So that posed an additional challenge."



With Bossé's consent, Bréard organized a meeting with resources that could offer financial assistance, including Emploi-Québec and representatives of Investissement Québec's Department of Specialized Financing. "I attended the meeting," says Bréard, "because my job is also to get the different parties interested in the project of the director I'm assisting. I also put Mr. Bossé in touch with the Ministère du Développement économique, de l'Innovation et de l'Exportation, which reimbursed Dare a portion of the cost of preparing its business plan, under the Assistance Program for Businesses." Bréard ensured follow-up, facilitating communication between Investissement

Québec, Mr. Bossé and the Dare executives in Ontario. The Saint-Lambert cookie plant obtained a non-repayable contribution under PASI, as well as support from Emploi-Québec.

Annie Bréard is Director, Subsidiaries, with the Department of the Americas. She is responsible for businesses in the Midwestern United States and can be reached at (514) 873-1461. ■