



## MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR – JULY 2008

Historically, June has been a great month for Baie d'Urfé. It has been a month in which important events in the life of the Town have occurred. It has been a month where the majority of the over 61 Baie d'Urfé Days festivities have occurred.

Some years June is particularly special as when the important event occurs on Baie d'Urfé Days weekend. Who can ever forget the joyous celebration and spectacular fireworks display on June 20, 2004, the day Baie d'Urfé reclaimed its independence!

### **Some recent important June dates:**

- June 14-16, 2002 Baie d'Urfé Days tradition continues despite forced merger with Montreal
- June 20, 2004 Referendum Day, Baie d'Urfé wins the right to demerge.
- June 21, 2007 The provincial government introduces Bill 22, an act to amend various legislative provisions concerning the urban agglomeration of Montréal

### **June 2008 special dates**

- June 12, 2008 All 15 demerged cities and Montreal come to an agreement regarding agglomeration reform
- June 13-15, 2008 Baie d'Urfé Citizens' Association puts on a Baie d'Urfé Days weekend to remember!
- June 16, 2008 Unveiling of centenarian tree and plaque, with Mrs Eleanor Algie as honoured guest
- June 17, 2008. Red Barn Garden planted by Baie d'Urfé's first-ever Junior Council
- June 20, 2008 National Assembly adopts legislation formalizing the June 12<sup>th</sup> agreement

June 12, 2008 was a good day for Baie d'Urfé and the other demerged municipalities on the island of Montreal. We reached a groundbreaking agreement with the City of Montreal and the Government of Quebec on reforming the Agglomeration, reforms which will take effect in 2009.

If these reforms had been in place in 2008, the taxpayers of Baie d'Urfé would have paid approximately \$1.3 million less in agglomeration property taxes ... a sizeable amount given Baie d'Urfé taxpayers contributed over \$9 million dollars to the agglomeration coffers in 2008.

This deal represents a major reduction in Montreal's power to pass its local costs onto its neighbours, including in particular: the institution of a 'quote-part' billing arrangement for



regional costs; the reform of the list of 'common expenses' charged to all islanders; and the return of arterial roads to the municipalities.

The 'quote part' reform means our residents will no longer get a second tax bill from Montreal for Agglomeration expenses. We will return to a single property tax bill which each city will send and which will reflect residents' entire tax responsibility for both local and agglomeration services.

The reform to the list of common expenses removes a number of items which do not meet the test of common benefit. As these will no longer be Agglomeration expenses, their cost will no longer be passed onto our residents. There is more to do in this regard, as described below.

The return of arterial roads to our municipalities represents a return to the principle that local taxes should finance local improvements. Our experience to date in the Agglomeration is that, although 18% of all the currently designated arterial roads are in the territories of the demerged cities and that although the demerged cities pay 20% for all arterial roadwork, only about 5% of that work has been done in our combined territory. The agreement therefore specifies that the debt incurred in making the improvements to each road in the years 2006, 2007 and 2008 will accompany its return. In short, we will no longer shoulder the massive debt incurred by the Agglomeration in fixing Montreal's own roads.

This deal does not reform governance. The Agglomeration, with its Agglomeration Council controlled by Montreal, survives unchanged. Still, the reforms already mentioned will significantly reduce its potential for mischief, and two internal mechanisms have been established with this agreement to protect our minority rights. The first of these, the secretariat, will be the means whereby we can obtain information on Agglomeration affairs which has heretofore been denied to us. The second, the audit committee, should ensure the fair execution of Agglomeration business.

We are also very pleased that Montreal will enjoy the new status of 'Métropole du Québec', along with a diversification of its sources of revenue. This is an essential consideration of the reform which will help Montreal deal with the transition.

This is still a work in progress. A working group with representatives of the demerged towns and Montreal will work on further reform of the Agglomeration. This group, animated by the ministry of municipal affairs, is expressly charged with reviewing the decision-making processes of the Agglomeration Council, the use of independent supra-municipal bodies to administer regional services, and the revision of local expenses related to Montreal's downtown core which are currently charged to the Agglomeration.

The agreement did not address the outstanding issues regarding water and the double taxation of certain municipalities like Baie d'Urfé who receive their water from a source other than the City of Montreal. Parallel discussions are ongoing. We hope to come to some agreement with the government and the other municipalities on the island of Montreal sometime before the end of the year.

As rewarding and exciting as June 2008 has been with the moving forward on a file that your Council has been working tirelessly for the past two and half years, so has June been for local Town events.



## VILLE DE / TOWN OF BAIE D'URFÉ

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I would like to especially thank Lyman Canning and the Baie d'Urfé Citizens' Association who once again went all out to ensure that all residents could enjoy a weekend full of fun activities for Baie d'Urfé Days. Everything worked like a charm ... all events, from the Bingo on Friday night to the spectacular fireworks on Sunday, were well attended and enjoyed by all. Even the weather cooperated and Baie d'Urfé was spared the much forecasted and dreaded thundershowers. Nobody or nothing dared to rain on our magical weekend! Many thanks to Lyman and our wonderful Citizens' Association for a job extremely well done!!!

A final comment regarding a new energy force in Town, a force that came into its own in June ... a force of refreshing youth power ... Baie d'Urfé's Junior Council. In June they attended a second Junior Council meeting, made their presence felt during the parade and planted a garden for the Town on the grounds of the Red Barn, which they will maintain for the Town. Well done, Junior Council and welcome on board!!!

To one and all, have a great summer ... enjoy your family and friends ... that's what it is all about!!!

Maria