

MONTÉRÉGIE CONNECTION PROJECT

**What would life in the Montérégie region be like?
...under the Energy Intensive scenario**

Gas, greenery and new agriculture
A Story by Kess Vaderheson

June 15th 2040: Clara Mazzola, president of the Chamber of Commerce of the Vallée-du-Richelieu, stands up in front of 300 Chamber members at the annual assembly to talk about the past years accomplishments. It was impossible to get the 1500 active members of the Chamber out to the assembly, but a number of them are participating virtually. On the big screen of the Pignons chalet in Saint-Charles Clara proudly projects the important points she wants to cover.



“Dearest partners, in spite of all the doubt expressed by the minister of the environment concerning potential for profit we now have shale gas wells in most municipalities in the North of the Vallée, and these wells have given an incredible push to industries and businesses of our region. The ecological groups that fought hard against this type of development all the way until 2020 are now envious of the success of this project and all the impacts it has had. And, let’s not forget the windmills that now soar high in the sky between our mountains! Thanks to these new forms of energy, our region is prosperous and our people are proud to be living in an area where they can enjoy good life quality and establish themselves in beautiful wide open spaces.” Miss Mazzola continues her speech emphasizing the



multiple greening measures that have been taken by businesses in the past years following new regulations instated by the local government. “Our cities are surrounded by a beautiful green belt and our natural heritage in the South of the Regional Country Municipality are better protected than ever.” Mazzola withholds from talking about the all the truck traffic generated by the shale gas industry, which leads to multiple annoyances for many people of the community. Instead, she focuses on recent advances in public transportation: “Trains and electric streetcars transport our citizens, allowing our roads to no longer be jammed with cars. Let’s congratulate ourselves as the number of members of our Chamber of commerce has reached record numbers! To think that in 2015 we were so proud of having 600 members... In the past years we have more than doubled that number!”

While the business people were clapping to Clara Mazzola’s enthusiastic speech the annual assembly of the Union of Agricultural Productors (UAP) in Saint-Jean-Baptiste, at the foot of Rougement, had also attracted many members. The UAPs president, Jacques Petit was contemplating the profound changes that had affected the agricultural world. “In St-Charles, St-Denis and even elsewhere in the North of the Vallée, our large

expanses of soya and corn fields from the past are now filled with hundreds of shale gas wells and windmills. In spite of this massive change, we've known how to rapidly adapt with our flourishing greenhouse industry which is now what characterizes our region." Mister Petit is naturally a very positive man, so he continues on with more positive observations: "In addition to this, our vast fields of the past have yielded their place to niche farms, created by a new generation of farmers that are well educated and visionary. Our citizens and people from the city are ecstatic about the variety of fresh fruits and vegetables available close to the city all year long! Dearest partners, the true success to be noted here is that our farmers are now experiencing a new type of relationship with people from the city which were once weary of us farmers."



While the members of the UAP were exchanging ideas at the coffee break, everybody agreed that thanks to the protection of the numerous green spaces in the South of the region tourism, businesses and restaurants were more and more prosperous. Some people were disappointed in the loss of the Northern landscapes of the past where cows were replaced by windmills and tall shale gas wells. People consoled themselves by the prosperity offered by the new forms of energy.