

CargoM gathering steam to promote Montreal

BY BRIAN DUNN

The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) with the 28-member European Union which went into effect on September 21, should be a big boost for the Montreal region, among others, according to Mathieu Charbonneau, Executive Director of CargoM, the Logistics and Transportation Cluster of Metropolitan Montreal.

The agreement is already paying dividends with Maersk Line adding a new weekly service between Montreal and Mediterranean ports in Italy, Spain and France. The new service, launched on Sept. 30, complements the company's existing service to Vancouver, Prince Rupert and Halifax, in addition to Montreal.

CargoM has been busy not only gearing up for an anticipated spike in trade under CETA, but with promoting the Montreal region in general as a great place to do business. Its six original working groups have been reduced to four to better reflect the priorities of its members.

This past summer, CargoM launched an information brochure called "Why Choose Montreal?" which is being distributed to major Canadian consulates, embassies and trade offices around the world. It lists ten reasons why companies should choose Montreal to expand. Among them is Montreal's ranking as one of the top five North American ports on the East Coast which offers one of the shortest container dwell times in the east. In addition, the region offers highly competitive freight transportation tariffs and is recognized for its intermodal reliability and efficiency, not to mention that Montreal is within two days travel of 110 million consumers in North America. And Quebec's Maritime Strategy (to develop industry and commerce along the St. Lawrence River) is pouring billions into logistics infrastructure improvements.

CargoM was also instrumental in launching Zoom Greater Montreal (zoommtl.ca), an interactive online database that acts as a realtor by providing users with information on commercial and industrial spaces available in the greater Montreal area. "For example, if you're in the IT sector, and you want land close to universities or other IT companies or close to the port or rail yard, you can cross-reference your requirements through Zoom Montreal," Mr. Charbonneau explained. "There are over 2,500 listings of potential sites and offices to choose from. There is 10 million square feet of land available in the East End. We could reduce a lot of truck traffic if we



can get more companies to set up there, close to the port."

CargoM also submitted a White Paper to the Quebec government related to *Projet de loi no 85* to establish two logistics hubs and develop an economic corridor close to Autoroute 30 as well as create industrial-port zones in the Metropolitan Montreal region. "We suggested ways to speed up paper work for transportation and logistics companies looking to set up shop in Montreal, to make sure Montreal would not lose business opportunities to neighbouring communities."

In 2017, CargoM participated in a number of major conferences and trade shows where it set up its own kiosk to spread the word that Montreal is an ideal place to set up shop. They included the Retail Supply Chain Conference in Orlando, a presentation to the Toronto Region Board of Trade and a Trade Mission to the United Kingdom.

In 2018, it plans to participate in other events, including the TPM conference in Long Beach, CA, March 4-7, for shippers and transportation providers from around the world. That's followed by SIAL Canada, the largest agro-food trade show in Canada that attracts some 1,000 exhibitors from over 50 countries. Next year's show is taking place at Montreal's Palais des Congrès, May 2-4.

"We're also organizing a promotional mission to Europe accompanied by some of our members where we'll visit actual clients. We're targeting cities we're doing business with as well as cities we want to do business with. The mission may possibly extend to Africa," said Mr. Charbonneau.

It's all related to CargoM's three main priorities in 2018, namely improving the fluidity of truck movements in and out of the port, economic development (with the help of Zoom Montreal) and the promotion of Montreal as a major transportation and logistics hub. The priorities mirror those of its members, with 88 per cent surveyed advocating working towards accessibility and transport fluidity, followed by 84 per cent in support of preserving Montreal's place in Canada's supply chain and 80 per cent in support of encouraging networking within the industry. "Quebec's Maritime Strategy and logistics hubs are in place. Now it's time to promote them on the ground," said Mr. Charbonneau.

And to recognize the major role transportation has played in growing Canada's economy, Marc Garneau, Minister of Transport, announced on July 4 that \$2.1 billion is being earmarked for the Trade and Transportation Corridors Initiative (TTCI) to build stronger and more efficient transportation corridors to international markets. The core element of TTCI is the merit-based National Trade Corridors Fund, which will provide \$2 billion over 11 years to strengthen Canada's trade infrastructure, including ports, waterways, airports, roads, bridges, border crossings, rail networks and the interconnectivity between them. With the launch of this fund, proponents are being invited to submit an expression of interest for funding to support projects that address the most urgent requirements. "While this will help all freight corridors to be more efficient, more emphasis will be put on Vancouver and Montreal," Mr. Charbonneau noted.