



**LAURENTIAN BANK
OF CANADA**

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Laurentian Bank – National Partner of Small Business Week®

Montreal, October 18, 2004 – Laurentian Bank is proud to be a national partner of Small Business Week® for the fourth year in a row. The Week is organized by the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC).

The 25th edition of Small Business Week® is held under the theme “YOU’RE THE POWER behind the Canadian economy, let’s share the energy!” with the focus on the growth of Canada’s export capacity and on the innovative spirit and creativity of the national companies. Its various activities will continue through October 23. When speaking on the subject, Mr. André Scott, Executive Vice-President, Commercial Financial Services, stated that “it is our responsibility to recognize and to promote SMEs and entrepreneurs. Their contribution to the Canadian economy is crucial, and by encouraging their efforts we help to push back the frontiers.”

The Week also pays tribute to the important contribution that small and medium-sized businesses make to the national economy. This year, Laurentian Bank will again present the Laurentian Bank Export Achievement Award, which includes a \$15,000 grant. The Award honours a company for outstanding achievements in the field of exportation.

Moreover, Laurentian Bank’s expertise in the field of economics will be highlighted during Small Business Week®. In fact, Mr. Carlos Leitao, Chief Economist with Laurentian Bank Securities, will make a presentation on the outlook for 2005, which will take place in Toronto on October 20. During this seminar, Mr. Leitao will review the current economic situation in Canada and present his vision of the months to come.

Moreover, in partnership with the BDC, Laurentian Bank has organized six networking events this year. Dedicated to various subjects of interest, these activities will take place in the cities of Montreal, Laval, Saint-Hilaire, Quebec, Hull and Sherbrooke and are intended for the SMEs of these regions.

Laurentian Bank offers a vast range of services to small and medium-sized businesses. Four years ago, Laurentian Bank joined in a partnership with the Business Development Bank of Canada to make the products and services of the two institutions available to their respective clients. This agreement allows SMEs to take full advantage of all these offers through just one bank partner.

Founded in 1846, Laurentian Bank ranks seventh among Canadian Schedule I banks, with assets in excess of \$16 billion. The Bank offers highly competitive products and superior personalized service to meet the banking and financial needs of individuals and small and medium-sized businesses, and independent financial advisors. The Bank's common shares (ticker symbol: LB) trade on the Toronto Stock Exchange. The address of the Bank's website is www.laurentianbank.com

-30-

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