

**Speech by Réjean Robitaille**  
**Senior Executive Vice-President,**  
**Retail and Commercial Financial Services**

I am happy to be here today to talk about the accomplishments of the three business segments under my responsibility: Retail Financial Services, Commercial Financial Services and B2B Trust. Fiscal 2005 was a very busy year for all of them. And I am proud of the progress made.

The main events that marked 2005 were the expansion and modernization of our branch network for retail and commercial clients, business development and portfolio growth initiatives, business process improvement efforts and the deployment of highly effective and refined marketing strategies.

Since November 1, 2004, we've opened ten new points of service, including eight financial services boutiques. This unique and innovative branch concept offers our clients a completely redesigned banking experience and creates an inviting and friendly atmosphere. Our boutiques have been very popular with our clients, and we are satisfied with their progress to date. We've also opened two new commercial banking centres in the Montreal area to better serve our commercial clientele. We now operate 28 commercial service centres across Canada.

Always striving to make our services even more accessible, we've installed 20 new ATMs. Moreover, in 2005, we renovated close to 20% of our retail branch network. While continuing with these programs, this year we plan to update 80% of our exterior signage to reflect the new image of Laurentian Bank.

From the point of view of our business volumes, we achieved good growth in our portfolios. In the Retail Financial Services segment, our mutual fund portfolios increased by 14% and our mortgage loan portfolios by 8%. Our mutual fund sales largely exceeded the minimum requirements established in the agreement

with Industrial Alliance. Also, the number of our VISA credit cards increased by more than 5%. Our RRSP campaigns and our mortgage loan sales reached a record high in 2005.

Though not as strong, our Commercial Financial Services segment also achieved growth in its operations. After several years of decreasing business volumes following our decision to withdraw from the corporate loans market, we are now back on the road to growth. The Agricultural Financing sector stood out with a significant number of new loans, generating a 10% increase in assets. Our Real Estate and SME Financing operations in Quebec and Ontario achieved a 5% to 6% increase in assets.

These results were made possible thanks to the ongoing efforts and keen business sense of our employees and managers. The talents and creativity of our marketing teams allow us to surpass consumer and client expectations and to dazzle them, in particular, thanks to our promotional campaigns as well as our business intelligence and information tools. During the year, we introduced several new tools, including our marketing campaign management system, in order to understand and become truly attuned to the needs of our clients as well as to strengthen our relations with them.

The B2B Trust team also focused on product reengineering, particularly its 100% Accelerator Loan and RRSP loan products. To streamline its offering, B2B Trust reviewed and redesigned its line of RRSP Loan products in order to help investment advisors who offer B2B Trust products to their clients.

All these efforts allowed us to achieve excellent growth in our portfolios, mainly with regard to Investment Loans, with a 12% increase. These results were made possible in particular thanks to our strong partners who put their trust in B2B Trust. The network of over 14,000 financial advisors who directly distribute our products is another key to our success.

In 2005, the Bank formed several other important partnerships, such as our *Complicité* Program with the *Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec*, our agreement with Western Union to offer its products throughout our branch network and our distribution agreement with Industrial Alliance.

Furthermore, I have the privilege to announce a new partnership in the real estate sector.

Re/Max and Laurentian Bank have signed an agreement whereby Laurentian Bank will have priority for mortgage referrals from Re/Max franchisees and real estate agents. Thus we could offer their homebuyer clients mortgage products and solutions that meet their specific needs.

As Head of these three lines of business, my main goal is to enhance synergies between the business segments in order to offer better services to our commercial and retail clients as well as to capitalize on their know-how. We've made solid steps in this direction already, especially in the commercial services sector where, we are convinced, making better use of our networks can boost our growth.

Our priorities remain the same: channel our efforts into the sectors and operations where we show good performance and have a competitive advantage, with the support of our employees. Our employees are our strength. We will increase our investment into training to help our employees reach their full potential.

We will continue to pay particular attention to the quality of our service in order to ensure a unique experience for our clients. Our quality of service has become a "trademark" of Laurentian Bank that sets us apart from the competition.