

QUÉBEC AT A GLANCE



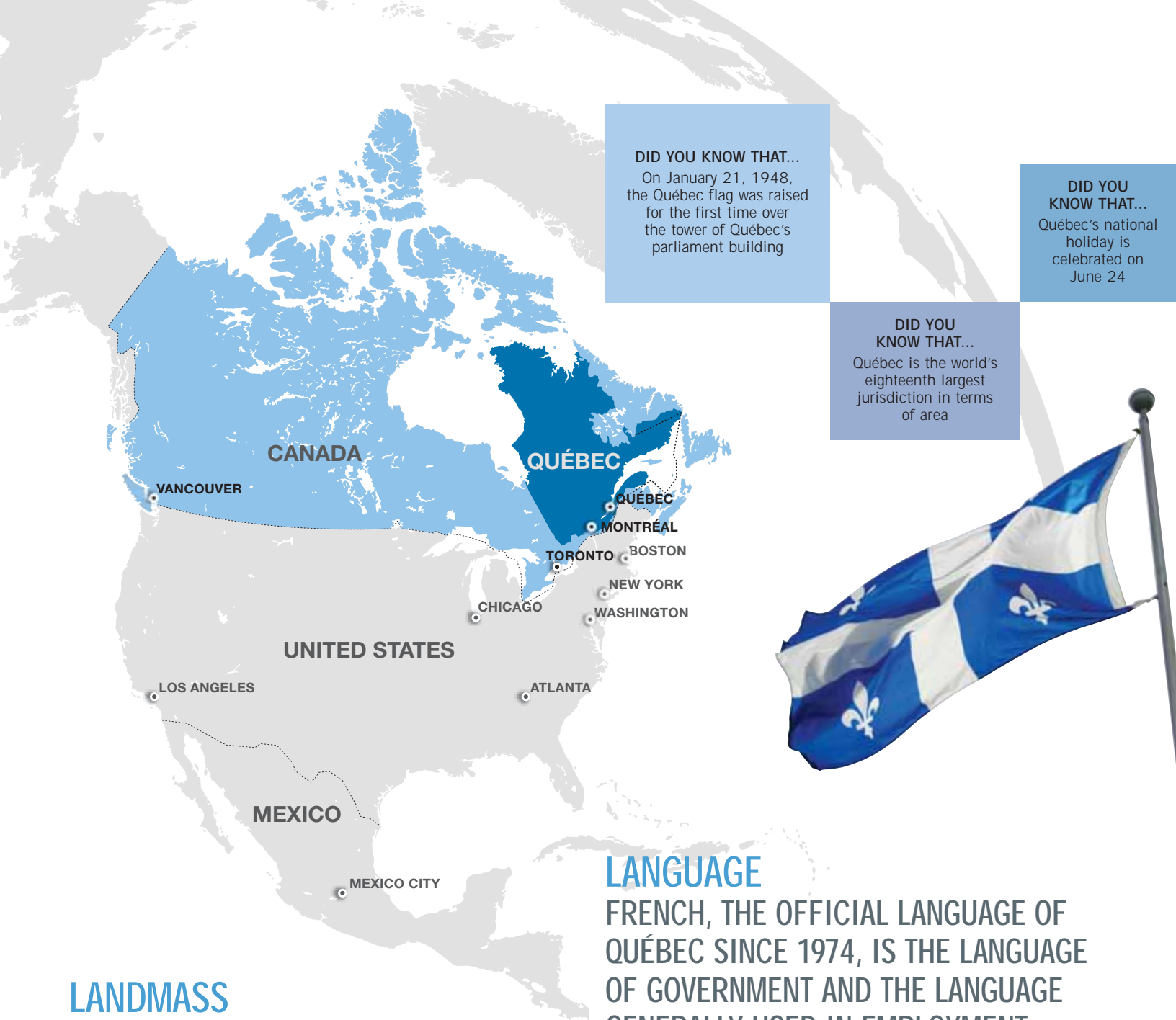
Photo: Al Seib / Costume: Dominique Lemieux © 2003 Cirque du Soleil

POPULATION

A MIX OF CULTURES HAS CHANGED THE ASPECT OF QUÉBEC SOCIETY, WHICH CONTINUES TO WELCOME TENS OF THOUSANDS OF NEWCOMERS EACH YEAR

Québec is home to 7.7 million people, or close to a quarter of the Canadian population. Most live in the south of Québec along the St. Lawrence valley and, in particular, in the Greater Montréal region, which accounts for almost half the population.

A majority of people in Québec are of French origin, although many have British or other European ancestry. Since the start of the 20th century, around 700 000 immigrants from Europe, Africa, Latin America and Asia have settled in Québec. In addition to the large number of Quebecers with foreign roots, including 10% born in another country, Québec is home to ten Amerindian nations and one Inuit nation that, together, make up 1% of the population.



DID YOU KNOW THAT...
On January 21, 1948, the Québec flag was raised for the first time over the tower of Québec's parliament building

DID YOU KNOW THAT...
Québec's national holiday is celebrated on June 24

DID YOU KNOW THAT...
Québec is the world's eighteenth largest jurisdiction in terms of area

LANDMASS
THREE TIMES THE SIZE OF FRANCE
FIVE TIMES THE SIZE OF JAPAN
LARGER THAN ALASKA

Québec is situated in the northeast of the American continent, and is a land of strong contrast in terms of both landscape and climate.

The largest of the ten provinces that make up the Canadian confederation, Québec has a landmass of 1.7 million square kilometres, dotted with a million lakes and rivers and traversed by the 1200-kilometre-long St. Lawrence River. This mythical, almost oceanic river is one of the longest navigable waterways in the world, providing year-round access to the heart of the continent.

The St. Lawrence is framed by two mountain ranges, and majestic forests cover over half of the land. The vegetative cover ranges from boreal forest in the south to taiga and tundra in the north, where the Torngat Mountains dominate the immensity of Nunavik.

LANGUAGE
FRENCH, THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF QUÉBEC SINCE 1974, IS THE LANGUAGE OF GOVERNMENT AND THE LANGUAGE GENERALLY USED IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, COMMUNICATIONS, TRADE AND BUSINESS

Québec is a broadly French-speaking society. A majority of Quebecers (83%) speak French at home, while 10% speak English and 6% speak another language. Québec has Canada's highest percentage of bilingual French and English speakers (40%). In Montréal, where the percentage of bilingual speakers reaches 57%, a large segment of the population (22%) is also fluent in a third language.

The *Charter of the French language* protects and promotes the French language in a manner that is respectful of speakers of English and other languages, as well as Aboriginal peoples. For example, the Charter guarantees the right of members of the English-speaking minority to receive instruction in English, the right of all English-speakers to receive health and social services in their own language, and the right of Amerindians and Inuits in Québec to maintain and develop their language and culture.

INSTITUTIONS

THE QUÉBEC PARLIAMENT, ESTABLISHED IN 1792, IS ONE OF THE OLDEST IN THE WORLD

Québec's political system is based on a British model. In its legal system, French private law, codified and based on France's Napoleonic Code, exists side-by-side with public law based on English common law.

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Legislative power is vested in the National Assembly, made up of 125 Members elected by universal suffrage, each representing an electoral division. A general election is held in Québec at least once every five years. In each division, electors cast their ballot for the candidate of their choice in a "first-past-the-post" system. All Canadian citizens aged 18 and over who have been domiciled in Québec for at least six months are entitled to vote. The leader of the political party with the most elected Members becomes the Premier and forms the government.

INNOVATIVE LEGISLATION

Over the years, Québec has passed legislation that has led to social advances in Québec and inspired other legislation around the world.

- **1975:** the *Charter of human rights and freedoms* declares and protects a number of fundamental rights.
- **1977:** the *Charter of the French language* ensures the protection and promotion of French.
- **1977:** the *Act to govern the financing of political parties* establishes principles of equity and transparency to control contributions to political parties.
- **1982:** the *Act respecting access to documents held by public bodies and the protection of personal information* is passed, followed in 1994 by the Act respecting the protection of personal information in the private sector.
- **1997:** the *Pay Equity Act* ensures full recognition for work performed by women, and guarantees equal pay for equivalent work.
- **2001:** the *Act respecting parental insurance* provides for paid parental leave for all parents following the birth or adoption of a child.



Photo: Jean Désy

HISTORICAL MARKERS

1534

Jacques Cartier lands at Gaspé and takes possession, on behalf of the King of France, of the area that would become Canada.

1608

Samuel de Champlain founds Québec, named after an Algonquin word meaning "narrow strait" that refers to the narrowing of the river at the site of the new city.

1642

Paul Chomedey de Maisonneuve founds Ville-Marie, known as Montréal by the end of the 18th century.

1759

At the battle of the Plains of Abraham, the French army is defeated by the British.

1763

Under the Treaty of Paris, the King of France cedes New France to the British crown, leading to the arrival of large numbers of English, Irish and Scottish settlers.

1774

Under the *Québec Act*, the inhabitants can continue to practise the Catholic religion and use the French language and French civil law in Québec.

1791

The *Constitutional Act* divides Canada into two provinces: Upper Canada (Ontario) with an English-speaking majority, and Lower Canada (Québec) with a French-speaking majority.

1867

The *British North America Act* seals the federation of the four Canadian provinces: Québec, Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.



Photo: Jean Désy

EDUCATION

OVER 60% OF THE LABOUR FORCE HAS A POST-SECONDARY OR UNIVERSITY QUALIFICATION

This is one of the highest rates in the world according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Québec devotes the equivalent of 7.8% of its GDP to education, an outstanding result. The education system includes both public and private schools. In the public system, full-time education is provided free of charge to all residents of Québec up to the end of the college level, while at university, tuition fees are the lowest in Canada and the United States. Students have access to a wide range of specialized options, including almost 300 vocational and technical training programs and 3 000 university programs.

Each year, 25 000 foreign students study in post-secondary institutions in Québec.

HEALTH

LIFE EXPECTANCY IN QUÉBEC TODAY IS 83 YEARS FOR WOMEN AND 78 YEARS FOR MEN

Québec's health and social services system is known for its extensive range of services, its accessibility and the fact that it is free of charge. In addition to free hospital services, Quebecers can obtain free medical services in public and private clinics. All Quebecers also enjoy basic coverage for prescription drugs, regardless of their income or state of health.

1960
Québec enters a period of modernization referred to as the "Quiet Revolution", with major reforms in the fields of social policy, health, education and economic development. During this period, Québec strengthens its position on the

international stage, based on the international extension of its domestic responsibilities.

1974
French becomes the official language of Québec.

1975
Québec signs the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement with the Crees, the Inuits and the Naskapis. The "Peace of the Brave", a specific agreement between the Québec government and the Crees, is signed in 2002.

1980
In a referendum, a majority of 60% of the Québec population rejects a plan to negotiate sovereignty-association with the rest of Canada.

1995
In a second referendum, 50.5% of the population votes against a proposal for Québec sovereignty accompanied by an offer of partnership with the rest of Canada.

2003
Acting on a Québec initiative, the Canadian provinces establish the Council of the Federation.

2006
A Canada-Québec agreement recognizes Québec's international role and its right to participate fully in all UNESCO proceedings, meetings and conferences through a representative with Canada's permanent delegation.

CULTURE

QUÉBEC'S CREATIVITY IS REFLECTED IN ITS THRIVING CULTURE AND COMMUNICATIONS SECTOR, WHICH PLAYS A KEY ROLE IN ITS IDENTITY AND ECONOMY

The excellence of Québec's creative artists and performers ensures them a wide audience abroad. Québec circus arts, for example, have experienced explosive growth over the last twenty years, in particular thanks to the École nationale de cirque in Montréal and Cirque du Soleil, which reinvented the art of circus. Other circus troupes, including Cirque Éloize, Les Sept doigts de la main and Cavalia, have followed in its wake and entranced audiences in the world's great cities.

In the field of music, an increasing number of composers, singers and musicians have become internationally known. These ambassadors of Québec culture are active in all styles, from classical music (L'Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, Les Violons du Roy) to Francophone song (Pierre Lapointe, Lynda Lemay, Ariane Moffatt), and from rock (Arcade Fire, Malajube) and electronic music (Tiga, Akufen) to the neo-traditional (La Bottine souriante, Les Batinsés).

The success of Québec film-makers such as Denys Arcand, Jean-Marc Vallée, Philippe Falardeau, Yves Simoneau and Steven Woloshen (a leading animated film maker) has also attracted attention abroad, where their films have earned prestigious awards at international festivals. In the field of television, Québec humour and drama are increasingly broadcast and appreciated in many different countries.

It is also important to highlight the success of Québec playwrights and directors (Robert Lepage, Wajdi Mouawad), choreographers (Marie Chouinard, Dave Saint-Pierre, Édouard Locke), dance companies (Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal, Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal) and authors (Michel Tremblay, Marie Laberge, Nicole Brossard). All of these creative and performing artists have helped to mould Québec's identity.



TOURISM

AS A KEY TOURIST DESTINATION, QUÉBEC RECEIVES ALMOST SEVEN MILLION VISITORS EACH YEAR: ITS MODERNITY, STRIKING LANDSCAPES, FINE CUISINE AND LIFESTYLE CREATE A WINNING COMBINATION

The old capital city of Québec, perched on the cliffs of Cap Diamant, has a European atmosphere. Its historical centre offers an architectural experience that is unique in North America, along with many other attractions, such as the famous restaurants, fashion boutiques, antique stores, art galleries, museums and ancient churches that line its narrow streets and reward a leisurely stroll. The city merges into the Plains of Abraham, an immense park overlooking the St. Lawrence and, at the foot of the cliff, the Petit-Champlain neighbourhood, the oldest commercial district in North America. Despite its pride in the past, Québec has a resolutely modern edge, exemplified in the brand-new downtown sector of Saint-Roch.



Photo: Luc-Antoine Couturier

Montréal, Québec's metropolis, is a successful mixture of modern skyscrapers and historical buildings. Famous for its museums, its cultural festivals (jazz, Francophone song, film, humour), restaurants, high-end boutiques and night-life, Montréal is trendy and cosmopolitan. It is also covered by a network of parks, cycle paths and hiking trails, and is one of the safest cities in North America.

The other regions of Québec also offer key attractions for foreign visitors, with sites and activities that can be enjoyed year-round: historic villages in the St. Lawrence valley and the Charlevoix region, striking landscapes on the Gaspé peninsula and the North Shore, wine-tasting and cheese-tasting trails in the Eastern Townships and the Montérégie region, winter sports in the Laurentians, hunting fishing and outdoor activities in the Lac-Saint-Jean region and the Far North, whale-watching at Tadoussac, and La Route verte, a 4 300-kilometre cycle trail that crosses Québec.



Photo: Marc Archambault



Photo: Pierre Beauchemin /ITCHO

Gourmet food and lifestyle appeal attract visitors to Québec



Photo: Bombardier

ECONOMY

QUÉBEC HAS A QUALIFIED, HIGHLY EDUCATED WORKFORCE

Québec's economy has evolved considerably over the past few decades. Long known for the abundance and variety of its natural resources, Québec now boasts a vigorous service sector that accounts for almost 70% of its gross domestic product. High-tech industries are also playing an increasingly important role.

Business set-up and operating costs in Québec are among the lowest in the industrialized world, and Québec offers a competitive tax regime for new investment and R&D expenditure. Rigorous management of public finances has led to a balanced budget in recent years, and measures are now in place to bring the public debt below 25% of GDP by 2025.

AN INTEGRATED, OPEN ECONOMY

Québec acts as a gateway to a major free trade zone, and is closely connected to the main North American trade networks. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) gives Québec access to a market of 440 million consumers. Almost 80% of Québec's international exports go to the United States. Its second largest trading partner, the European Union, accounts for almost 10% of its international exports,

and it maintains business ties with several other regions of the world. For example, exports to China have increased at an average annual rate of almost 20% since 2000.

AN INNOVATIVE ECONOMY

QUÉBEC IS THE CANADIAN PROVINCE WITH THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF R&D EXPENDITURE AS A PERCENTAGE OF GDP



Photo: ©2006, HYBRIDE, courtesy of Emergence International / GMT Productions



Photo: Ubisoft



Photo: Centre INAD

A WIDE RANGE OF VIDEO GAMES AND SPECIAL EFFECTS FOR FILM HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED IN QUÉBEC

HIGH-TECH SECTORS

Québec's aerospace industry, the sixth largest in the world in terms of turnover, is one of the most highly-structured sectors of its economy. One out of every 200 people in Québec works in aerospace, and the Montréal region is one of the few places in the world where practically all the components of a modern aircraft can be found within a 30-kilometre radius.

The life sciences, and biopharmaceuticals in particular, have made Québec a leader in North America. Ten of the largest international pharmaceutical companies and producers of patented products have research and production facilities in Québec. Several well-known medications, used around the world, were discovered and developed in Québec, in particular for the treatment of HIV/AIDS and asthma.

Forest products and metals have made Québec a key player at the international level. Québec is the world's largest exporter of newsprint and third largest producer of pulp and paper. It is also the third largest producer of aluminum in the world.

The dynamic information and communication technologies sector has earned Québec a pole position in North America. From telecommunications to multimedia and from information technology to the design and manufacture of electronic components, the range of skills available in Québec covers all sectors of a constantly expanding market. The sector accounts for over 115 000 jobs in 5 000 different companies, most grouped in the Montréal region.

The plastics sector is growing rapidly in Québec, thanks to the development of high-performance products that can be substituted for metal and glass. Packaging, construction and transportation are the main outlets for the plastics industry, which has 500 businesses employing 30 000 workers.



Barrage: Hydro-Québec

ENVIRONMENT

UNDER THE QUÉBEC *CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS*, EVERY PERSON HAS A RIGHT TO LIVE IN A HEALTHFUL ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH BIODIVERSITY IS PRESERVED

Québec is the Canadian province with the lowest level of greenhouse gas emissions per capita, and its action plan on climate change sets out a coherent vision for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the achievement of the objectives of the Kyoto Agreement.

Québec's energy strategy is clearly focused on the development of clean energy sources, especially hydroelectricity and wind energy. In all, 97% of its electricity is generated by water power. The water policy ensures protection for this essential element of the public heritage.

Major development projects are examined by the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement (BAPE), which informs and consults the population before ruling on the environmental acceptability of each project.



THIS BROCHURE IS PRINTED WITH ECOLOGICAL INKS ON PAPER MADE ENTIRELY FROM RECYCLED FIBRES.



Photo: Jean Desj



Photo: Luc-Antoine Couturier

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

Since 1971, Québec has held the status of participating government at the International Organization of the Francophonie



Photo: Luc-Antoine Couturier

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

Québec funds daycare services for children aged 0 to 4, for which parents pay only \$7 per child per day



Photo: Claudel Hubert / OTCCUO

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

The city of Québec has the lowest crime rate of all major North American cities, and Montréal is one of the safest metropolitan areas in the world, with a crime rate of 1.9 per 1000 inhabitants

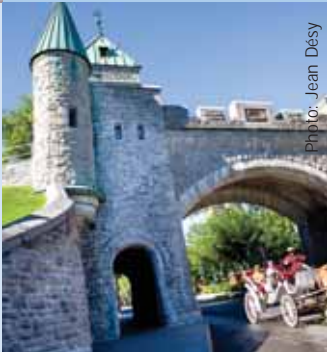


Photo: Jean Désy

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

The city of Québec, recognized as a world heritage site by UNESCO for its historical centre, is the only walled city north of Mexico



Photo: Luc-Antoine Couturier

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

The Lower St. Lawrence region is renowned for its marine expertise and has a thriving marine biotechnology sector



Photo: Jean Désy

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

Québec's emblems are the snowy owl, yellow birch and blue flag iris



DID YOU KNOW THAT...

As a pioneer in the defence and promotion of cultural diversity, Québec was the first government in the world to approve the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions



Photo: Jean Désy

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

The Greater Montréal area ranks second in North America, after Boston, for the percentage of university students in the general population. Montréal has over 5 000 university researchers



DID YOU KNOW THAT...

Montréal is one of the world's largest French-speaking cities

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

Montréal has been named as a UNESCO City of Design



DID YOU KNOW THAT...

The Abitibi-Témiscamingue region is renowned worldwide for the abundance of its deposits of precious metals, copper and zinc



DID YOU KNOW THAT...

Quebecers are passionate ice-hockey fans, and the Montréal Canadiens, a club founded in 1909, is North America's second most successful professional sports team



Canadiens de Montréal

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

Quebecers take full advantage of all four seasons! They enjoy winter sports (hockey, ice-skating, skiing) just as much as summer sports (cycling, canoeing, camping, hiking)



Photo: Marc Archambault

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

Québec's professional and amateur athletes are involved in high-level university sports and extreme sports such as freestyle snowboarding and skiing, in which they have earned world titles. Children are enthusiastically taking up the sport of soccer, which is enjoying strong growth



DID YOU KNOW THAT...

The Saguenay – Lac-Saint-Jean region is a world leader in aluminum production



Photo: Jean Desy

QUÉBEC PRESENCE WORLDWIDE

OPEN TO THE WORLD AND ACTIVE IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, QUÉBEC HAS AN EXTENSIVE NETWORK OF OFFICES THAT HELP BUILD PROSPERITY AND PROJECT ITS IMAGE ABROAD



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