



Administration  
portuaire de Montréal  
*Au cœur du commerce*

**Press release**  
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Awarding of the Gold-Headed Cane at the Port of Montreal

**MARKET DIVERSIFICATION AT THE PORT OF MONTREAL MITIGATES  
THE EFFECTS OF THE ECONOMIC CRISIS**

**MONTREAL, Quebec, January 4, 2010** – The President and Chief Executive Officer of the Montreal Port Authority (MPA), Ms. Sylvie Vachon, today officially inaugurated the start of a new year of activities at the Port of Montreal by awarding the Gold-Headed Cane to Captain Steven Lloyd, of the United Kingdom, Master of the OOCL Belgium, the first ocean-going vessel to enter the Port of Montreal without a stopover in 2010. The OOCL Belgium left the Port of Liverpool in the United-Kingdom on December 24 at 12:09 a.m. Its arrival highlights the fact that the Port is open year round to all transoceanic vessels.

This awarding ceremony of the 171st Gold-Headed Cane brought together many representatives of the marine industry and the Montreal business community. The event also allowed the MPA to salute the work of the pilots from the Corporation du Saint-Laurent Central and the Port of Montreal, Messrs. Pierre Labelle et Pierre Parent, who brought the ship safely in to port.

Flying the Hong Kong flag, the OOCL Belgium, measures 245 metres long. Operated by the Orient Overseas Container Line (OOCL), this container ship was launched in 1998. It is docked at the Racine terminal, which is operated by Montreal Gateway Terminals Partnership, and will set sail in the coming hours for the Port of Liverpool.

.../2



## **2009: a year marked by a global crisis for containers, but excellent for grain**

Both for the Port of Montreal and its main competitors on the East Coast, the year 2009 was marked by the global crisis, resulting in a drop in traffic. "Preliminary data for December 2009, however, indicate that the decrease in traffic has stabilized. This points to a gradual but slow recovery that calls for us to remain cautious," stated Ms. Vachon, further explaining: "According to the latest figures available, about 1,260,000 TEU (twenty foot equivalent) containers were handled at the Port in 2009. The total volume of all traffic combined is close to 23.8 million tonnes. This puts the decline for the year at 11.9%, demonstrating the Port of Montreal's competitive strength in relation to its main competitors on the East Coast. Also noteworthy are the extremely positive results in marine grain shipping, up 16.9% for the first 11 months of 2009, representing some 220,000 tonnes.

"The difficulties faced by Canadian and American manufacturing sectors had a major impact on the traffic of containerized cargo and on dry bulk cargo such as iron, zinc and copper. However, thanks to market diversification on our routes to the Mediterranean and Caribbean along with excellent results in grain shipping, we have mitigated the effects of the crisis," stated Ms. Vachon.

The President and Chief Executive Officer concluded by pointing out that the Port's fast execution together with its fluid logistics chain is a trademark of the Port of Montreal. This explains its success on the Northern Europe and Mediterranean route, and is currently behind the market diversification along its Latin American and Asian routes.



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### **About the Montreal Port Authority**

The Montreal Port Authority (MPA) operates the world's largest inland port. It is a leader among container ports, handling 26 million tonnes of cargo annually. According to preliminary data from December 2009, the Port of Montreal handled more than 1,260,000 TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units) in 2009. The Port of Montreal operates its own rail network, providing direct access to berths, and is linked to two major railways and a highway system. It also operates a grain terminal and a marine passenger terminal. All other terminals are operated by private stevedoring firms. Through its activities, the Port of Montreal generates 18,200 jobs and \$1.5 billion in economic spin-offs every year.

- 30 -

### **Note to the heads of photo divisions:**

*A colour photo of the Gold-Headed Cane awarding ceremony will be available on CNW.*

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