

Vichy Val d'Allier :

Focusing on professional training

In 2010 the Community of Local Communes (CLC) adopted the Schéma de COhérence Territoriale - SCOT (Territorial Coherence Scheme) with view to building a broad based sustainable future for the local community. The results highlighted a number of priorities for the next decades. Vichy Val d'Allier (VVA) has numerous strengths, advantages and attractions which are continuously being improved.

The CLC is looking to reinforce its business attractiveness even further by, for example, providing ongoing and diversified training services capable of replying to the needs of local companies based in the area.

Community of Local Communes (CLC) - Key figures:

Population: Nearly 80,000 inhabitants.
Positive demographic change for the second largest CLC in the Auvergne Region (from 1999 to 2008 the population increased by 546 inhabitants)

Geographic Area: 327.5 km².

Population Density : 236 inhabitants per km².
More than half of the inhabitants concentrated in Vichy and Cusset.

23 Communes make up the VICHY VAL D'ALLIER (VVA) CLC:
Abrest, Bellerive-sur-Allier, Billy, Bost, Brugheas, Busset, Charmeil, Cognat-Lyonne, Creuzier-le-Neuf, Creuzier-le-Vieux, Cusset, Espinasse-Vozelle, Hauterive, Le Vernet, Magnet, Mariol, Saint-Germain-des-Fossés, Saint-Rémy-en-Rollat, Saint-Yorre, Serbannes, Seuillet, Vendat et Vichy.

- 8 Communes with more than 2,000 inhabitants:

- Vichy (25,700)
- Cusset (13,900)
- Bellerive-sur-Allier (9,000)
- Saint-Germain-des-Fossés (3,700)
- Creuzier-le-Vieux (3,300)
- Saint-Yorre (2,800)
- Abrest (2,700)
- Vendat (2,200)



VVA is located at the heart of Vichy's employment catchment area of nearly 110,000 inhabitants in 81 Communes, 40 of which have less than 500 inhabitants and 65 are in predominantly rural areas.

Continuously opening up and reaching out

Situated at the top of the Auvergne Region's ridge of increasing population growth, VVA has privileged relationships with both the urban Clermont hub, between Clermont-Ferrand and Vichy, and the Rhône Alpes region.

VVA has developed a privileged two-way relationship with the economic region of Clermont-Ferrand through the Clermont-Auvergne-Metropolitan Network, and also cooperates on various projects with the Greater Roanne CLC. In March 2011 the National Commission announced that a public debate would be opened in the autumn concerning the **arrival of the TGV in the Auvergne**. The details of the project to link the Rhône-Alpes region to the Île-de-France/Paris via the Auvergne would then be fixed. Given the period required for public discussions, the commissions which have to be created to establish a financing plan, and the various construction phases which have to be completed, it is highly unlikely that this new line will be operative before 2025.

Priority must be given to the policy of opening up and reaching out locally, nationally and internationally, by becoming part of the major motorway and high speed train networks. This is an indispensable prerequisite to successfully developing the territory. It will not only help to attract new businesses but also help develop businesses already established in the area.

As part of this program, 2015 should see the opening of the A719 Motorway link from Gannat to Bellerive, and the South-West portion or the Vichy ring road. The project for the North-West portion of the ring road has been blocked since 2006. The State has, however, provided a further €200,000 to reactivate the scheme and undertake further feasibility studies, with view to this section also being completed by the end of 2015. The **bypass around the greater Vichy area** would then be fully operational.

Promoting the expansion of the University and growth in training courses: vectors for dynamism in the area.

« **Successful CLC's manage the training courses they provide to coincide with the present and future requirements of the companies and businesses based in their area.**

A successful and dynamic local economy must include a convergence between further education and academia, and the employment market. The object is to make sure that local students have a job when they finish their education.

Industry is a major factor for local development: we must be able to provide adequate training facilities and qualified personnel.

For the last 10 years, our CLC has developed its competences under the dual signs of civic solidarity and territorial cohesion. One of its first successes was the opening of the Lardy University Technology College (Pôle Universitaire et Technologique) in cooperation with the universities in Clermont-Ferrand. The College is now an integral part of the Clermont-Ferrand-Vichy urban hub, which we will continue to develop going forward.

VVA now has nearly 2,200 students living and studying in the community. The CLC is doing everything we can not only to attract but also to keep this new and young population, for both future economic and demographic reasons. We are also very conscious that we have to maintain and improve the quality of life in our community, making it a better, more attractive and more dynamic place to live. That is why we continuously improve the local sporting facilities, with the latest example being the new swimming centre. We have also improved the local transport network with the introduction of MobiVie buses, which are more economical to run and produce less pollution.

*Our tenth anniversary is an important stage in the development of the CLC. Our community is **more accessible and open and reaches out to other partners and communities**. In the future the CLC is looking to portray a more modern, fresher and younger image of our community. The Schéma de COhérence Territoriale - SCOT (Territorial Coherence Scheme) is a partnership between the VVA CLC and its member citizens to fix the main lines for future developments in the quality of life in the community. »*

Jean-Michel Guerre
President of the VVA CLC.



July 2011 saw the third annual Student Accommodation Forum organised jointly by VVA's Youth Information Service (Point Information Jeunesse-PIJ) and the Lardy University Technology College.

VVA CLC also offers an online search tool for student accommodation in collaboration with the Youth Information Service and the regional youth-info network, on the www.info-jeunes.net website. VVA has also created a « **student accommodation label** » and charter to optimise the quality of the way we welcome students into the community. The charter covers a number of specific and detailed rules and regulations and has been signed by various local companies and institutions involved in letting and renting out property: landlords, real estate agents, the LOGIL housing association, the CAF [local branch of the National Family Allowances Fund], the Foyer de Jeunes Travailleurs- FJT [Hostels for Young Workers], the CREPS-Centre de Ressources d'Expertise et de Performance Sportive [Sports Management College], the Youth Information Service [PIJ] and ADIL, the Agence Départementale d'Information sur le Logement [County Housing Information Agency]. These partner organisations use this label as a sign of the quality of the service they provide.

At the beginning of the new academic year all 11 to 25 year olds will receive Culture and Sport vouchers providing substantial reductions to events.

and development. Supporting local business.

Maintaining the level of excellence at the University Technology College

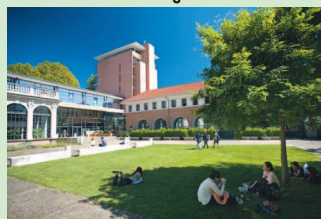
There will be no spectacular increase in student numbers at the beginning of the new academic year for the University Technology College. After ten years of existence and growth, all places at the College are fully subscribed. « Last year saw the number of enrolled students double. The building works and expansion are now complete and we have achieved maximum student numbers.

Going forward more than 800 students on 17 courses (from BAC+2 to BAC+5) will be present on our magnificent 9,500m² urban campus, situated in a privileged setting, in the middle of Vichy's famous parks. We intend to maintain our levels of excellence.» says Jacqueline Girard, the college Director « The mosaic of nationalities and cultures we have on one site, when you include the foreign students attending the CA-VILAM language school, can only reinforce the campus's reputation and influence. »

Continuing to move forward

Even though higher education, training and university level courses are now fully established in the community, more can be done. « The regional authorities have helped the VVA CLC acquire the adjacent buildings, which when modified, will allow us to offer places to a further 200 students. For the beginning of the 2012 academic year two new, large, modulable rooms will be available, fitted out with high-performance equipment. Each one will be able to seat up to 100 students. They will help to continue the high level of teaching and technology available on the campus. We continue to actively collaborate with the universities in Clermont-Ferrand, and are fully integrated into the Higher Education and Research Centre which is being created. We want to be ready and able to reinforce those courses and subjects which can have a direct effect and participate in the renewal of the local economy.

Jacqueline Girard
Director of Vichy's Lardy University and Technical College
(Pôle Universitaire et Technologique Lardy)



- The **Cavilam** language school is located on the university college campus. It has a worldwide reputation for its work researching teaching methods, and has made a number of innovative contributions to the way languages are taught. During 2010 the school welcomed 3,475 language students and teachers from 119 different countries. Although the largest contingent comes from European countries, the number of Chinese and Japanese students increases every year. There is also a regular and sizeable contingent from Australia, Brazil and Mexico.

The foreign languages and teacher training department also provides courses adapted to the requirements of professionals working in the international arms of various sectors of industry.

- The **Qualidev Resources Centre** is located next to the campus. It is open to students and companies interested in the problems of Quality Assurance, Security and the Environment (QSE). The centre is located in the restored and converted Convent of the Célestins, and is run by the Moulins-Vichy Chamber of Commerce. It is a place to meet and exchange ideas and opinions. It also monitors new and innovative methods concerning Sustainable Development and provides up-to-date information and documentation.

Qualidev has developed a programme of activities, in collaboration with both public and private partners, to optimise the performance of companies in this field. In particular, they work very closely with the **Region Auvergne Quality Performance Centre** [Pôle Qualité Performance en Région Auvergne], one of the three regional centres recently created in France to provide efficient services to meet the needs of SME's and SMI's in terms of QSE.

Stimulating a stable demography

The population of VVA has remained stable for the last ten years. In fact, the small but positive increase of 0.7% is mainly due to a much larger increase in the smaller communes: for example, a 21.5% increase in the number of inhabitants in Bost compensated for the reduction in the number of inhabitants in the more populated areas, such as the 4.5% reduction in Vichy's town centre.

As the population gets older, VVA is reinforcing its strategy of attracting new inhabitants who

are not yet retired by offering tax breaks, particularly an increase in the family tax allowance, and by **developing and providing adequate and quality schooling.**

Providing students with an education from CAP to BAC+2 in a modern and well equipped campus.

Since April 2011 the Albert Londres campus officially regroups the previously named Presles general and technical lycée, the professional lycée and the Greta Dore Allier for adult education [GRETA-groupe d'établissements publics d'enseignement qui organise des actions de formation continue pour adultes-state adult education] It is François Demange who now supervises one of the largest school campuses in the Auvergne region. The site is on the Cusset-Vichy border and covers 18 hectares. The Regional Council has invested €71 million to rehabilitate and refurbish the buildings. Work started in 2006 and should be finished in 2014. « We are in the middle of a transition: the refurbished buildings will contribute to the coherence of the new campus and enhance standards and the working environment. Our 2,000 students will have a unique, fully equipped science building. The 600m² Documentation and Information Centre will also have substantial resources. The school curriculum and the organisation of class timetables will benefit tremendously from the new structures.

Our aim is to optimise the success of our students who will now be able to pursue courses from CAP level to BAC+2 in excellent conditions. Our student catchment area is very large, and not only includes the urban areas of Vichy and Cusset, but also rural areas. Many of our students come from small local communities. Our objective going forward is that every student will be successful and leave with a diploma. We have developed close working relationships with members of the local economy relative to the different courses we provide. Local authorities, companies and associations work with us in the development of numerous projects. This type of collaboration helps our students to progressively integrate into the sector of activity they have chosen as a career path.

A good example of this type of interactivity between the teaching staff and local industry is the Forbois @uvergne technology platform which is present on site. This regional structure regroups and coordinates training and education for the Forestry and Timber sectors. It provides companies in the sector with the skills and know-how of specialised college teachers, university teachers and students. Furthermore, it also makes available to them all the technical platform services provided by each academic partner. This type of technology and innovation transfer provides students with the opportunity to show and test their knowledge and skills, and at the same time gain valuable industry and work experience. From the school's point of view, it is a good way of enhancing the technical, industrial and professional courses we run, and where necessary changing or adapting the syllabus. »

François Demange
Head Teacher at the Albert Londres Campus



Improving the interface between training, education and professional insertion

Mme Ghania Ben Gharbia, the Head Teacher at the Lycée Valéry Larbaud Senior School in Cusset, has announced her desire to « *reconcile quality of life with quality of education* » on the campus created some ten years ago in the heart of the Vichy basin. The school was financed by the Regional Council and has become « *an impressive, high-quality educational tool, both in form and substance* ». The campus benefits from a very privileged environment, with modern buildings designed around curves with lots of light, fitting harmoniously into wooded grounds. The school curriculum is polyva-



lent, providing a whole range of « *well thought out and structured* » subjects and courses. The different courses run from CAP [certificat d'aptitude professionnelle - professional aptitude certificate] level to BTS [brevet de technicien supérieur - equivalent to the BTEC Business and Technology Education Council Qualification]. Course choices include Hospitality [Hotel, Catering, Restaurant skills], Business Studies and Homecare Services. The school is also well equipped with laboratories, computer rooms, kitchens, restaurants, dispensing optician workshops and sales areas. « *This lets our students develop their chosen career project in an environment and manner which will help them with their professional integration. We have a number of professionals who regularly participate in the coursework, whether at the school or during work outplacements. For Continuous Vocational Training we collaborate closely and successfully with Greta Dore Allier.* »

Making sure that the skills and know-how of our students conforms to present day job market requirements.

We provide a range of technical and professional courses which have been carefully chosen and targeted: for example, Dispensing-Optician Assistant. More and more students are applying for places on these vocational courses. Presently 50% of students come from the Allier and the rest from all parts of the country. « *At the beginning of the academic year we had nearly 950 students. Each year the number of applicants increases, particularly for the professional, vocational and technical courses. The beginning of the 2011 academic year saw a new 3 year Professional Bacalaurate Course in « Home Health, Aid and Homecare (in a professional structure) », as well as a first year for a CAP in « General Catering » (canteen). Both courses were created in response to job market demand.*

Industry with specific employment requirements needs to develop a working relationship with education, to make sure that students integrate successfully into the professional environment. Similarly, we in the education industry need to be continuously aware of changes in society and the economy, to make sure we are in phase with real or emerging employment needs. »



Ghania Ben Gharbia
Head Teacher at the Lycée Valéry Larbaud Senior School

Courses targeted for specific industries

For a long time the region of Vichy has suffered due to the specificity of its industrial base but now major changes are taking place. The difficulties faced by certain traditional sectors have, paradoxically, at the same time favoured the expansion of new activities with future potential.

Working with the Building Industry as skills requirements increase in certain métiers

Even though the Building Industry has not been spared by recent economic problems, it still remains an attractive job market for young people. « *The salaries of apprentices have been revalued in recent years with the agreement of the different branches of the industry. This has, in turn, improved the image of the industry as a whole. Today, young people no longer turn to the Building Industry « as a last resort ». They are motivated because the different skills and métiers they learn will lead to them getting a job at the end of their education.* » Jean-Jacques Devaux, the Director of the Ecole des Métiers du Bâtiment [Building and Construction School] in Bellerive, specialising 100% in building industry skills, points out that the number of students in the school has remained stable. « *From CAP level, to BAC Pro and BTS, the 7 specific trades covered by our courses attract 700 students each year. In 2000 only 0.3% of our students were female, now it's*



3%. This is due mainly to the improvements made in on-site working conditions. Unfortunately, although we have increasing numbers of students looking for apprenticeships, for certain trades it is still difficult to find them an employer willing to take on an apprentice. This is the best way, however, for companies to ensure that their recruitment will be successful. On top of that, companies that take on apprentices get Government funding. Even though the economic crisis has seen a decrease in building activity, now is the time to get the necessary qualifications and training so that when the market turns we won't be lacking a skilled workforce. We are seeing a rise in the demand for skilled workers and there are lots of opportunities to either buy or create a Very Small Business (VSB) or a Small or Medium Enterprise (SME).

A new approach to skills, trades and métiers

Using work-based training programmes is an ideal way of being able to adapt courses and qualifications to any evolution in a particular skill or trade. A good example is Eco-Construction, particularly after the French Government's "Grenelle de l'Environnement" conference, and the different measures they brought into law. Everybody in the industry is affected by the requirement to have Sustainable Development, which means we have to develop new building techniques and methods.

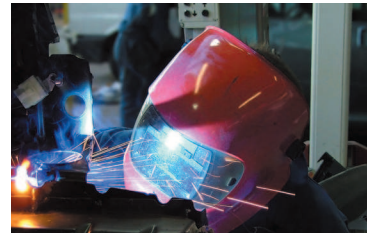
It also means that skills and know-how will increase across the board, at all levels and in all trades. This is not just about new techniques and new technologies, but about the way work is organised on site. All the different trades need to communicate, collaborate and work together to improve global site performance. We are now judged on performance, which means we have to organise the methodology of the way we work. Every person, every trade present on-site has clear responsibilities, which means Quality Assurance Control. For us in education, as teachers and trainers, as well as for the students and apprentices, this can only be a good thing and a source of motivation and professional progress. »

Jean-Jacques Devaux
Director of the Ecole des Métiers du Bâtiment



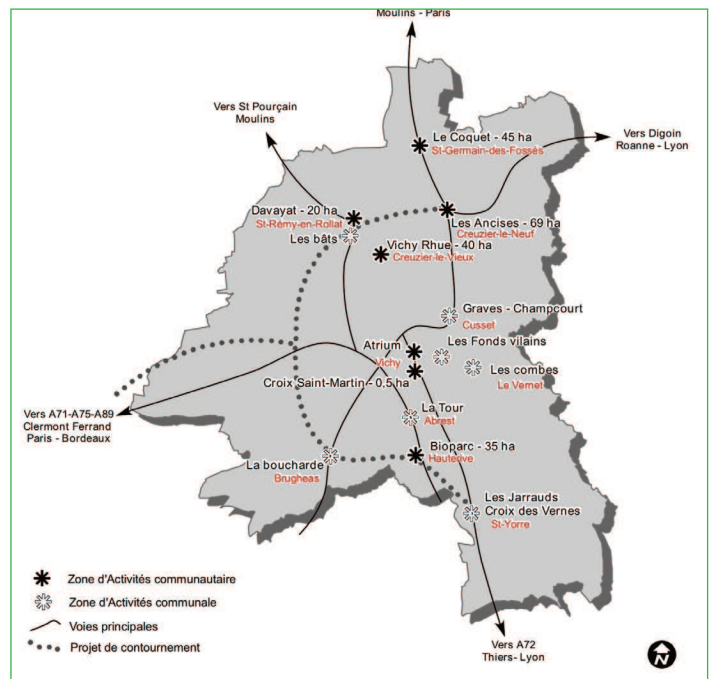
Vichy Val d'Allier counts more than 400 industrial companies covering a whole range of different activities, and forms the second largest industrial base in the region

Plastics (CTL Packaging, Wavin France SAS etc.), **electronics** (Nizerolles Systèmes Electroniques, Labinal...), **electricity** (Maclean Power France, Peintamelec...), **metallurgy** (Les Profilés du Centre and Galva Eclair, part of the Galva Union Group, one of the European leaders in hot-dip galvanisation, Valmont at Charmeil, N°2 in France for metal lampposts and masts...) and also the **automobile industry** (Ligier, the world leader in Véhicule Sans Permis-VSP production [not needing a drivers licence], Altia – manufacturing parts and assemblages from steel wire...).



The Agro-Food Industry plays an important role in the area employing 17% of the workforce: it is the 2nd largest in the Auvergne and employs 12.5% of the sector's total regional workforce. The thirty or so different companies in the area produce a variety of products: the famous Vichy Pastilles (69 employees), the bottled water industry (246), the poultry-meat industry (240 employees for the company Arrivé Auvergne), Charolais and Organic beef (Convivial, winner of the regional INPI award for innovation, intends tripling production capacity by end 2012), powdered desserts and instant powder drinks (Capryl) etc.

For a number of years the CLC has been reorganising and diversifying its activities. This diversification has encouraged the development of the service industries in the area, as well developing skills, competences and abilities in a variety of other sectors.



As part of its corporate expansion Maclean Power France has moved into premises in the Graves business park. The company makes composite insulators for electrical power networks. The CLC will invest €700,000 each year in 2011 and 2012 to develop new sites and improve services, roads, access etc. at the Davayat, Les Ancises and Bioparc business parks.



As part of this strategy, VVA has developed a service industry centre, **The Atrium**, with 8,000m² of flexible and modular office space near to the SNCF Railway Station: the site is already 75% occupied. The centre includes a business incubator, already accommodating fifteen companies; a "company hotel" offering various sizes of

office to rent, from 30 to 500m²; and the Atrium Express, providing furnished offices to rent by the day with fully equipped meeting room with video projector. The Atrium is designed and equipped to support service industry companies, whether at the start-up stage, development stage or mature companies looking for larger offices. The site has a 350 space car park. The extra service on an internal inter-company nursery will be available from September 2011.

For more information visit the Atrium's website www.atrium-vichy.com

Career paths

Since March 2011 Catherine Joseph is Territorial Director of the **Association nationale pour la Formation Professionnelle des Adultes (AFPA)** [National Association for Adult Training and Education] for Auvergne North. She confirms that as far as the AFPA is concerned: « everybody should be able to get extra training, get further education and improve their qualifications. We have set ourselves the target of **improving the level of qualifications of all active adults**, starting with the least qualified. Our adult training and education courses already exist, covering several hundreds of different trades and métiers. They cater for the skilled worker up to senior technician level, in Construction and Building, Industry and Services sectors. The working environment and conditions are exactly the same as they would find in their chosen sector. The instructors/teachers are professionals with at least 5 years experience in their trade or métier.

The Auvergne was one of the first regions to introduce a specialised adult education service. We organise our courses in line with the requirements of the Region, the Pôle Emploi [Jobcentre] as well as local profession and trade organisations and companies. We have two campuses in Clermont-Ferrand, one in Montluçon and offices in Moulins and Vichy specialised in the services sector. We have 120 staff in AFPA North Auvergne and offer as wide a range of courses as possible, adapted as best we can to the specific requirements of the region. Our instructors and staff are very competent and follow their students' progress very closely. We also have excellent technical and technology platforms adapted to each course subject and the requirements of the professional teachers. »



The **Dore Allier basin GRETA** relies on resources and equipment provided by state education institutions and 3 continuous vocational training advisers (Christine Portier, Catherine Ghesquière and Michel Coutier), to provide pertinent, continuous vocational training courses for the local economy.

« Our role is to motivate people of all ages who either have no vocational training or who didn't complete their training, to make a success of their chosen career. » For Céline Duffaut, Technical Director of **Greta Dore Allier**, based in the Albert Londres campus, « being happy in your work, means being happy in your life. To have professional coaching, a skills assessment, or a Validation of Acquired Experience (VAE), could make a lot of difference to someone's career. General training or further education (industry, services, home aid and home care, hotel-catering-restaurant, optician...), are all individualised and supported by a dynamic group motivation.

Nearly 70% of the participants are jobseekers enrolled by the local Pôle Emploi/Jobcentre or the local Cap Emploi (Jobcentre for the disabled). The remaining participants already have jobs and are supported/financed by their employers, local authorities or training insurance funds. We work together as a team with our instructors/teachers (part-time or full time): our common objective is to provide our "students" with the opportunity to successfully develop their professional skills and career at all levels. »



Dans le domaine des services spécialisés dans les relations clients, The telemarketing and client relations companies, Satel and Karavel, continue to expand their businesses. Various SME's have positioned themselves in niche markets or in very specialised sectors of activity, for example at the BIOPARC in Hauterive with JCE Biotechnologie, Sétubio and Vectec, specialised in the **Health-Beauty-Fitness sector**.

For more information visit the Bioparc's website www.bioparc.com

The sector is further enhanced by the presence of the L'Oréal group at Creuzier-le-Vieux, with their subsidiary Cosmétique Active Production producing, amongst others, the Vichy range of cosmetic products based on the local mineral water.

Vocational training: also for adults!

The total number of jobseekers in the VVA employment catchment area was nearly 10.5% at the end of 2010, showing a slight decrease of 0.3% during the year. The long term unemployed, over 2 years, count for 44% of the total figure. A lack of professional qualifications is partly to blame for this situation. The challenges for the local economy going forward are, therefore, directly linked to a job creation policy based on training, education and qualifications.

Fortunately, whether we are talking about extra or complementary training and qualifications in an existing career sector, or a complete change of career direction, the necessary support and guidance is available locally.

The local **Jacques-Lacarin Hospital** in Vichy has a staff of 1,800 and is one of the largest SME's in the CLC. Substantial improvement works costing more than €60m started in 2009, making the hospital larger and more modern, and are still on-going. A Mother and Child Centre opened in 2006 as well as a Geriatric Psychiatric Ward [Unité de Psychiatrie du Sujet Agé-UPSA] at the beginning of 2011, a new building to house a Kidney Disease Centre is scheduled to open in 2014. The Medical-Surgical block is being re-organised, and will include a coronarography examination block with imaging system. The hospital will also have a neurovascular unit for treating cerebral vascular accidents [CVA- accident vasculaires cérébraux-AVC], brain-haemorrhages and strokes.

Thermalism, a potential growth market

Starting from its reputation as a Spa Town in Roman times, Vichy has developed an added-value brand image mainly due to its dynamic and innovative « **health-beauty-fitness** » sector. The renaissance of **active thermalism** oriented towards prevention and follow-up care, combining a healthy diet with practising sports and traditional spa water treatments.

The Nutritional Centre is the operational base for the « Vichy slimming coaching [Coaching minceur à Vichy] » programme. This is where the slimming programmes are elaborated and the latest scientific information exchanged with their partner Medical Schools and Research Centres. The « Slim in Vichy [Maigrir à Vichy] » programme launched in cooperation with local partners has reinforced the attractiveness of Vichy as a Spa resort.

The strategy « good health for everybody » provides a centre for research and different applications using nutrition as a means not only to lose weight, but also to prevent illnesses, particularly certain forms of cancer.

Because it is « gynaecologically logical and essential not to limit women to their function of reproducing » a centre specialising on this subject will open in Vichy towards the end of 2011. Dr Thierry Haag is the initiator of this project. He intends bringing together under one roof all available medical and scientific skills and knowledge to allow women to live their femininity to the full.

The centre aims to harmonise the different important stages in a woman's life, from puberty to maturity. Three specific themes will be developed: bio-surgery, echo-endoscopic imagery and anti-aging. The centre will be based in the modern surroundings of the Spa des Célestins for consultations, but will also organise themed days, debates and workshops.

Business tourism increases



Business tourism represents 50% of total local tourism, and continues to increase its market share, covering different sites and in different forms: the events held by the Palais des Congrès-Opéra de Vichy exhibition and conference centre in the town centre, and the Palais du Lac, alongside the Allier river, which is developing into a successful exhibition centre. Add to this the different residential seminars and day long vocational training sessions held in hotels.

The Omnisports Sports Complex held 249 events during 2010, confirming its suitability for hosting major sporting activities.

During the year the Tourist Office registered 77,000 business tourism overnight stays, with the average stay being just over 2 nights: this is an increase of 8% over 2009.

Since the end of 2010, the **Congress and Seminar Destination Platform** is responsible for promoting the various facilities managed by the Tourist Office which can be used for business meetings, seminars, exhibitions, congresses, trade fairs etc.: the Palais des Congrès-Opéra de Vichy exhibition and conference centre, the Omnisports Sports Complex, the Valéry Larbaud Cultural Centre.

Since its opening in 1997, the **Palais des Congrès-Opéra de Vichy** exhibition and conference centre has continued to expand its business, not only due to the increased activity in conferences and congresses, but also because of their constant diversification. In 2010, the site hosted 101 events and maintained its Turnover similar to 2009. The Palais des Congrès has the advantages of a 18,000m² town-centre site, in the heart of more than 6 hectares of riverside parks along the River Allier waterfront, with quality hotel accommodation close by: 1,400 hotel rooms in 2, 3, and 4 star establishments. This success means that Vichy can confirm its position as one of the leading business tourism, congress and conference destinations in France. On top of this, there are the numerous professional and themed events which add to the bookings schedule.

Vichy Val d'Allier CLC used the Palais des Congrès to host and co-organise the 20th Rencontres Nationales de l'Economie Territoriale/RNET [Conference of Local Economic Development Agencies] in May this year. More than 200 professionals from French local authorities, local government, chambers of commerce, chambers of agriculture, training centres and consultants, participated in an exchange of ideas on sustainable territorial economic development. The 2011 convention of the Grand Orient de France Freemasons Lodge will again take place in Vichy (the largest convention in France in 2010 took place in Vichy with 1,400 participants).

Being different, adds value to our training and further education courses.

New name, new location, new Director. 2010 « put us back on the rails » as far as Françoise Machebeuf is concerned when she was appointed Director of the Lycée Privé d'Enseignement Supérieur de Vichy [Private School for Further Education] (previously the École des Carrières Supérieures de Vichy-Higher Education and Careers School created in 1963). « *The quality of our courses and training in **Beauty, Management and Tourism**, which are still an important part of local higher education opportunities, has earned us the political and economic support necessary to continue our activities. The Préfet de l'Allier [civil servant representing the state] has signed a collaboration agreement for the new school with a business in the Nantes region of France, which means will continue with the same five Post-BAC courses and the existing staff.*

When the new 198 students arrived at the campus in Avenue des Célestins in 2010, they found a **teaching staff more motivated than ever**. Being located next to the Lardy University College they had no problem fitting into the dynamic student life in Vichy. The new 2011 academic year will benefit from 6 new lecture rooms located nearby the main school.

Going forward we are looking to sustain our competitiveness by offering a number of new courses and options, such as « **Sports Store Management** » in partnership with the Déathlon Group, for BTS students on Sales Unit Management courses, or the **International Relations** option for students studying on BTS Assistant Manager courses. We also intend to reinforce English classes, particularly for BAC Pro Students, and become more internationally orientated with more international study trips enabling students to learn about major project finance. These new strategies will enhance the attractiveness and academic reputation of our school. »

Françoise Machebeuf
Director of the Lycée Privé d'Enseignement Supérieur de Vichy



« Diploma » rhymes with « Job »

The Centre de Ressources, d'Expertise et de Performance Sportives (CREPS) [Sports Skills, Resources and Performance Centre] Vichy-Auvergne sits in over 9ha of grounds adjacent to the Omnisports Sports Complex. The CREPS is under the auspices of the Ministry of Sport, has an annual budget of around €3m, and makes a major contribution to the local sports economy. The institution employs thirty nine full time public service employees, a further ten under specific contracts, and fifteen site contract maintenance workers. There are also 160 part-time teaching staff. Each year Jean-Marc Lapierre, the Director of the CREPS, and his team, provide a programme of sports education, organisation and management in a variety of domains: swimming (instructor), water sports (rowing, canoe-kayak), outdoor sports (golf, rambling etc.), body contact sports (Kick Boxing, Full contact, French boxing...) and team sports (Basketball, Football, Handball, Rugby and Volleyball).

« *As part of the Centre de Formation d'Apprentis-CFA [Apprentice Training Centre], we receive around 1,000 part-time students each year for basic training and/or continuous vocational training. For 2010, more than 87% were successful and left with a Diploma. Because the training courses we provide correspond to existing requirements in the market, we have good placement levels with around 90% finding a job within the 6 months after getting their diploma.*

From Level IV, equivalent to Baccalaureate, courses can last from 10 to 18 months, depending on the speciality. In the large majority of cases, 100% of course fees are funded by our different partners: the authorities responsible for collecting apprenticeship tax contributions, the Regional council and the State. » the Director explains. When a student passes the Professional Diploma a range of employment opportunities become accessible, including specialised instructor, territorial public sector employee and employee of a sports association.

Another part of the CREPS' mission is to **accompany and prepare high-level sportsmen and women**, with 4 training centres for « promising young athletes » in rowing, basketball, football and table tennis.

In September 2010, the French Wushu (Chinese martial arts) Federation decided to base its main training centre in the CREPS.

The French Handisport Federation has recently agreed to locate its first « youth » centre in the CREPS, specialising in swimming, scheduled to open on September 1st 2011.

The **National Centre of Excellence for Sports and Health** providing advice, support and expertise, is also based in the CREPS structure. « *It is an important network of experts, documentation and information concerning such subjects as fighting obesity, the relapse of certain pathologies, or addictions in sport, like doping. These are not only pertinent and topical subjects, but they fit perfectly into VVA's strategy to ally sport with health.*

« *Since the building work and restructuring that took place between 2007 and 2010, I believe that the CREPS should also be considered as being a « top-level » location. Given the different sporting and educational structures we now have, and the fact that we have accommodation and catering facilities on-site we have the capacity to organise major events, such as the CAPEPS-national PE teachers final examination.*

Jean-Marc Lapierre
Director of the CREPS Vichy Auvergne



VVA has encouraged various specialised training and educational courses to respond to local employment demands for tourism and « well-being » care specialists and professionals.

The HÉCATE group has been based in Vichy since its creation in 1989. The group specialises in balneology, spa treatments and well-being care. It has developed an impressive local technical platform. The group's contacts with the Compagnie de Vichy provide regular opportunities for its Human Resources business. « *The opportunity we have of working with Vichy Spa Les Célestins provides a real added value to our training and education services. We started working together 16 years ago. Our partnership with one of the most important Health-Beauty-Fitness centres in Europe has definitely helped us to obtain the Level IV Accreditation in Balneology for 2008. In fact we were the only institution in France to obtain this accreditation.*



Sports economy: an international campus

Vichy and the surrounding areas provide the opportunity to practise **most major sports and at all levels**. The 50 different sports which make up this offer form an exceptionally high quality technical platform which makes an important contribution to the local economy. **Sports tourism** is essential to the Vichy basin economy. In 2010 it generated 13.6% more hotel overnight stays than the previous year, with a total of 110,000. The Turnover of the Omnisports Sports Complex increased by 56%, compared to 2009, due to the complex's ability to successfully host major national and international events (JOCA 2010, Challenge SANOFI, etc.).

The widened River Allier covers 100ha and has a new competition Finish Tower. It is used for rowing, sailing, water skiing, jet skiing, mono-hull powerboat racing and canoe-kayak, with major competitions being organised every year.

Situated in 120ha of green belt with mature trees, bordering the river Allier, the **Omnisports Sports Complex** not only provides facilities for a **large number of sporting disciplines** with top level equipment, but also has accommodation and a restaurant. The complex is also capable of organising seminars, conferences, exhibitions and trade fairs. It has eight football pitches, including a synthetic pitch, two rugby pitches, an athletics stadium, 18 tennis courts, a top level boulodrome with indoor and outdoor facilities, a canoe-kayak and rafting whitewater course, and an archery shooting ground. The Pierre-Coulon Centre is also home to the **JAV** professional basketball team, with nearly 3,000 supporters at each game. The JAV's public have been rewarded on several occasions for the quality of their support and their circle of sponsors « Jav Enterprises », with more than 150 local business members.

VVA also boasts 2 eighteen hole golf courses; a racecourse with more than three hundred races from May to September, with forty being PMU certified for off course betting, the highlights of the season are the Trotting Festival and the Grand Flat Racing Week in July; and a recently renovated show jumping stadium which hosts a major international competition each year, Jumping International.

To develop VVA's equestrian activities the CLC is considering a project to create a **regional equine platform**, located on a 62ha site at the Domaine de La Cour, at Bellerive-sur-Allier. In complementarity with the Sichon show-jumping stadium and the Vichy-Bellerive racecourse, the project focuses on 4 main equestrian activities: organising other types of equestrian competitions, horse riding training/lessons, research, including sports medicine, nutrition and hippotherapy, and equestrian tourism, including accommodation, beginners' circuits and longer treks. A public/private partnership will be responsible for the construction, maintenance and running of the project and its facilities. The consultation process began at the end of May 2011 to find the companies best equipped to meet the partnership's requirements.



The latest generation **swimming centre**, located on the site of the old Clay Pigeon Shooting Range at Bellerive-sur-Allier, opened in March 2008 and had more than 200,000 visitors during its first year. The total number of 232,000 visitors, of which 190,000 were paying users

with entry costs being kept low, made it the 2nd most visited sports centre in the region. The centre is certified to hold major swimming events, and has already organised a number of top-level competitions. Michael Phelps has already used the centre, and was sufficiently impressed by the 25x21m indoor pool and the Olympic size outdoor pool, both made of coated stainless steel, that he intends to return with the American Olympic Team for their last training camp before the 2012 London Olympics.

If these efforts make VVA an attractive destination for business, leisure and new inhabitants, their initial impact is to improve the quality of life of the existing population.

Jobs, education, training, housing, transport, infrastructure, culture, sports... everything is based on delivering sustainable well-being for our community.

The Allier: Reinforcing its attractiveness

Department of the Allier-Key figures:

Population: 342,807 habitants.
A slight demographic decrease

Geographic Area: 7,340 km², equating to nearly 1.4% of the national land mass
A strategic European crossroad

Population Density: 47 inhabitants per km².
Rural land counts for 70% of the Department's surface area



The Allier is at the crossroads of a number of major European transport links, and fully intends to take advantage of this central position to develop its local economy. The Department of the Allier has three main entrance points, which are also used as windows on its three neighbouring Regions, the Centre, the Burgundy and the Rhône-Alpes. The three CLCs of Vichy, Moulins and Montluçon count for most of the economic activity in the Department.

- The population erosion of nearly 3% per year over the last 3 decades seems to have been reversed with only a 1% decrease since 1999, about 0.1% per year. The Department is getting stronger. Only the west of the Department, around Montluçon, is still seeing a decrease in population. The northern part around Moulins remains stable, and Vichy in the South sees its population slowly increasing.

All areas, including urban areas, are seeing their populations get older and reducing in size, as the number of deaths outstrips the number of births. In this context, the Allier is looking to increase its attractiveness and encourage new inhabitants.

- With more than 4,000 students enrolled in nearly 80 different higher-education courses, the Department is increasing its efforts, particularly in the more innovative sectors, to attract a young adult population. The creation of a scheme for higher education in the Department looks to consolidate the links between education, training and the corporate sector.

- All political and economic actors are constantly mobilised to provide the Department with the necessary priority infrastructures. The challenges are critical: **improve competitiveness, increase attractiveness, reverse the demographic trend**, while continuing to guarantee user security.

Opening up road transport access means making the RN 7 (A road) and the RCEA (Route Centre-Europe Atlantique - Atlantic-Central Europe Highway) into 4 lane highways, which, unfortunately, is taking a long time to finalise.

East-West Link:

The RCEA between La Rochelle and Macon, north of Lyons, links the Atlantic coast with Germany, Switzerland and Italy.

Of the 130km which cut through the Allier, less than 25% are in four lanes. The programme to **fully convert this portion to 2X2 lane** was the object of a public debate in 2010 with view to accelerating the construction works. The project should be completed by 2017. This project is considered a priority in the Schéma National des Infrastructures de Transports [National Transport Infrastructure Scheme]. In total it covers 240km across the Allier and the Saône-et-Loire Departments. So far only 30% is in four lanes. For the last 30 years, this 2 lane A road has been one of the most deadly accident black spots in the country.

North-South Link:

The **RN7** is an essential artery for the Departments for the Nièvre, the Allier and the Loire, as it services a number of important employment catchment areas. Local and Departmental Government are still pressuring Central Government to get the full 243 kilometres converted to 2x2 lanes (78km in the Allier).

- With an unemployment rate of 9.3% at end 2010, the Department is slightly over the national average of 9.2%, but the trend is in the right direction. The young adult unemployment rate for the under-25s is improving, decreased by 17.3% over the last year. Senior unemployment, however, remains a problem, with the over 50s counting for 23% of the jobless total in the Department.

The services sector is improving dramatically, now accounting for more than 50% of jobs: the Allier distinguishes itself by the importance of trade in the Department, in one form or another.



▪ **One in four new companies in the Region is based in the Allier: mostly SMEs.** The Department is the second most important in the Auvergne Region. Vichy and its local area form the major economic area in the department, ahead of Montluçon and Moulins. **The Industrial Sector maintains employment levels at 20% of total employment in the Department,** which is higher than the National average in France. Employment is mainly concentrated in the chemicals industry, rubber, plastics, metal working and electric and electronic components sectors.

▪ As innovative as it is productive, **the agro-foods industry continues to expand.** The estimated global Turnover for the sector is €1.5 billion in the Allier, with 4,200 employees in 84 companies. The largest contributor is the meat and poultry trade, counting for 29% of the companies in the Department and 54% of the sector's workforce.

▪ Forests cover 22% of the area of the Allier and the timber industry is very active in the Department. The Forest of Tronçais is one of the most beautiful in France, and covers nearly 11,000 hectares. In the Allier 40% of the employment in the **timber sector** is in timber transformation.

▪ **Agriculture, the third most important contributor to the Department's economy, covers two thirds of the land.**

An average farm size is 82 hectares. The Allier is the biggest producer of organic products and foodstuffs in France, and counts 7 Red Label awards. AOC attributions are also increasing. Three quarters of farms have dairy herds, which makes the Allier the second largest dairy livestock producer in France. Wheat is the principle cereal produced.

Around 200 agricultural farms are put up for sale every year in the Department. The Departmental Plan for Agriculture 2009-2013 intends to make such farms more autonomous, with new methods of production.

▪ Sectors that perform well and Centres of Rural Excellence-CRE (Pôles d'Excellence Rurale-PER).

Two new Centres have been accredited so far in 2011 (Adding value and Innovation by virtual reality- Valorisation et innovation par la réalité virtuelle presented by the Pays Saint-Pourcinois CLC ; Training and development in the timber sector-Formation et développement des métiers de la filière bois presented by the Montagne Bourbonnaise CLC). The Nutrition and Health Naturopole Business Park (Parc Naturopôle Nutrition Santé) at Saint-Bonnet de Rochefort has been a CRE since June 2006, and has recently had its accreditation renewed.

Local authorities support innovative SME-SMI's to organise themselves in networks and clusters to better confront and develop their external markets. The Department gets its strength not just from its natural resources, but also its skills, experience and know-how: the Allier is reorganising its structure.

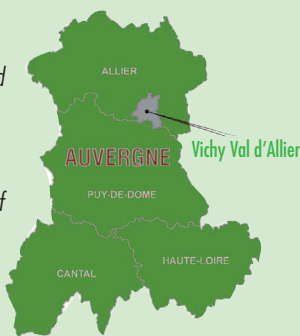
The Auvergne: dynamism confirmed

Auvergne Region-Key figures:

Population: 1 341 863 habitants.
(2.2% of the national population)
A confirmed increase due to the influx of employed workers.

Geographic Area: 26,000 km², equating to nearly 5 % of the national land mass.
Situated at the heart of Europe and the Centre of France near to the Rhône valley.

Population Density: 51 inhabitants per km².
Less than half the national average of 110 inhabitants/km².



A dynamic « volcano effect » has provided the Auvergne with a reputation which continues to improve. The region remains attractive, supported by an increase in population and excellent economic activity.

▪ **The demographic growth** shown by the Auvergne has produced an increase of 27,300 inhabitants since 1999, nearly 3,900 each year (+0.3%). This progression is tending to accelerate: the region could see a population increase of 8% by 2040, which means an extra 1.45 million inhabitants. INSEE believes that such an increase

would be felt more in the Departments of the Haute-Loire and Puy-de-Dôme; at the same time the average age of the population would increase less dramatically than the national average.



Actively developing the region's attractiveness

The reason why the Auvergne increased its population is that more people came to live in the Region than left it. The region's reinforced attractiveness has enabled it to check the decline of the last two decades of the 20th century, and reverse the trend.

▪ **The young working population** programme (30-59 year olds) was launched with a successful promotional campaign: web sites (www.auvergnelife.tv, www.welcomeauvergne.com, www.lesurbanophiles.com). The idea of developing « entrepreneur residencies » has allowed company creators or buyers wanting to base themselves in the region, to be accompanied by local professionals and have some of their costs reimbursed.

▪ In 2010, the Region adopted the policy « **youth, a major cause for the region** » in order to promote their ability to become autonomous and giving everyone the « same chance of finding sustainable employment ». A major consultation was undertaken, mostly via the website 16-30 or through themed meetings organised in all four Departments of the Auvergne. Based on the information received, a White Paper on Youth was published in 2011; a Young Adult Support Pack is now offered to 16-30 year olds, to help fund accommodation, mobility, health, culture etc.

▪ The Auvergne Region has allocated €112 million to education for 2011, of which €71.5 million is for works and equipment for secondary schools under their responsibility. A guide to apprenticeships in the Auvergne has recently been published.

Continued economic development

▪ The unemployment rate recorded in the Auvergne at the end of the 4th quarter 2010 was 8.1% of the active population, compared with 9.2% nationally.

▪ Since March 2009, the programme Auvergne Broadband ADSL with added satellite solutions, has allowed the Auvergne to become the 1st Region in France to have 100% broadband cover. The Region continues to develop its privileged relationship with the Rhône-Alpes Region, via the growing economy of the Brioude-Issouire-Clermont-Ferrand-Vichy axis: 50% of commerce is with this neighbouring region along the strategic link connecting Geneva to the Auvergne.

The Region has 3 business and research clusters (pôles de compétitivité), the Elastopole, Cereals Valley (Céréales Vallées) and Viaméca. A further 7 excellence clusters consolidate the links between business, training, education and research: **MÉMO MÉCATRONIQUE** (Mechanical and mechatronics engineering) **JCEP** (Plastics - Plastic Extrusion), **NUTRAVITA** (Food, Nutrition and Health), **INSTITUT DE RECHERCHE PHARMABIOTIQUE** (Probiotics Pharmaceuticals), **ANALGESIA PARTNERSHIP** (Healthcare - Pain Management), **AUVERGNE TIC** (IT and Communications Technologies), **E2IA** (Eco-activities and Eco-technologies).

By combining natural and human resources, the Auvergne can offer « grass that is greener than anywhere else »... Active « urban dwellers » are arriving in ever greater numbers, attracted by the quality of the environment and the way the local economy continues to assert itself in a quiet but confident manner.

The Auvergne has a new brand name: « Auvergne new world ». Its « objective is to bring together all the different actors in the Region behind the same slogan, and show that the Auvergne is a territory resolutely fixed in the future with a real project for its society » (René Souchon, President of the Auvergne Region).



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