

Bank of Montreal Expands North American Wealth Management Services with Arizona Acquisition

TORONTO, September 14, 2000

The Bank of Montreal Group of Companies (TSE, NYSE: BMO) continues its North American expansion of wealth management products and services, with today's announcement of the acquisition of Scottsdale, Arizona-based Century Bank. The transaction is valued at \$Cdn 24 million (\$US 16 million) and is subject to regulatory approval.

"Century Bank is an excellent addition to the wealth management operations of Harris Bank and Bank of Montreal," said Tony Comper, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Bank of Montreal Group of Companies. "The acquisition of Century Bank is an important part of our strategy to expand in high-growth, affluent urban markets in the United States. Our strength lies in a coordinated approach to wealth management: the melding of e-business with a physical presence through our expanding U.S. network."

The purchase of Century Bank follows the acquisitions earlier this year of Seattle-based direct brokerage Freeman Welwood and Florida-based Village Banc of Naples, in addition to last year's purchase of a Chicago-based direct brokerage now known as Harris InvestorLine. Bank of Montreal's aggressive North American growth strategy includes the rapid expansion of its wealth management lines of business and building on the long-standing expertise of Harris Bank in the United States.

In the past year alone, Bank of Montreal's Private Client Group has made a total of \$Cdn 250 million (\$US 170 million) worth of acquisitions in key affluent areas of the United States. Total assets under management and administration and term deposits have grown to \$Cdn 222 billion (\$US 150 billion) for an annualized growth rate of 21 per cent for the year.

Established in 1997, Century Bank has \$Cdn 90 million (\$US 61 million) in assets and \$Cdn 80 million (\$US 54 million) in deposits. Century Bank's main office is in Scottsdale and there are two branch locations in Deer Valley and Carefree. The three branches are situated in the central part of the state, where more than half of Arizona's population lives.

"Century Bank gives us a well-established, profitable operation with a high concentration of clients who will appreciate the choice and flexibility provided by our wide-range of wealth management products and services," said Gilles Ouellette, President, Bank of Montreal Private Client Group. "This acquisition expands our ability to distribute a full suite of wealth management services in a highly desirable market. "

Century Bank will be part of Bank of Montreal's Private Client Group, which has total assets under management and administration and term deposits of \$Cdn 222 billion. The Private Client Group brings together all of the bank's wealth management services, including retail investment products, full service investing and direct brokerage, private banking and institutional money management, both in Canada and the United States. The Private Client Group is focused on wealth management, which represents the fastest growing area in the financial services category. It is a cornerstone to providing integrated banking and financial services to meet rapidly changing client needs.

Bank of Montreal, Canada's first bank, is a highly diversified financial services institution. Subsidiaries of the bank include BMO Nesbitt Burns, one of Canada's largest full-service investment firms and Chicago-based Harris Bank a major U.S. mid-west financial institution.