

# SELLING HARTFORD AS HOME



STEPHEN DUNN / THE HARTFORD COURANT

**EDGAR DREYER**, owner of Dresca Construction, rakes leaves in front of the three new homes, from right, that he built on Jefferson Street in Hartford.



MARK MIRKO / THE HARTFORD COURANT

**CARPENTER JEFFREY MASTRO** puts finishing touches on windows in a Frog Hollow house that is part of the Cityscape housing revitalization program.

## Mayor Bent On Raising Homeownership Rate

By **MIKE SWIFT**  
COURANT STAFF WRITER

### Best and worst

Top three and bottom three cities with a population of over 100,000, ranked for percentage of homeownership.

|                          |            |
|--------------------------|------------|
| <b>Newark, N.J.</b>      | <b>24%</b> |
| <b>Hartford</b>          | <b>25%</b> |
| <b>Jersey City, N.J.</b> | <b>28%</b> |
| <b>Peoria, Ariz.*</b>    | <b>84%</b> |
| <b>Gilbert, Ariz.*</b>   | <b>85%</b> |
| <b>Livonia, Mich.**</b>  | <b>89%</b> |

\* Suburbs of Phoenix; \*\* Suburb of Detroit

SOURCE: 2000 Census

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**J**uan R. Liz, a 31-year-old immigrant from the Dominican Republic, sees the impending purchase of his first home as a step toward a college education, and a better life, for his children.

"I think it's going to give me more financial freedom," said Liz, who expects to close on a newly built duplex in Hartford next month. "It's a two-family, and I'm going to be collecting rents for the units, so that's going to put me at ease. Having two kids, I want to set up an education account for them, and I haven't been able to because things have been too tough."

From new Mayor Eddie A. Perez on down, there is little disagreement that Hartford badly needs more homeowners like Juan Liz.

Hartford has the second-lowest rate of homeownership among America's 245 largest cities, according to an analysis of the 2000 Census by The Courant.

About two-thirds of the households in the United States own their homes, the highest national rate in history, the Census Bureau said recently. The rate is about the same in Connecticut. But in Hartford, just 25 percent of homes are owner-occupied.

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MARK MIRKO / THE HARTFORD COURANT

**NIEVE WOLMART** and her husband, Felipe Morales, talk with real estate agent Luz Conde in a Cityscape model home in Hartford's Frog Hollow section. The Cityscape program builds and renovates homes to revitalize the neighborhood through homeownership.