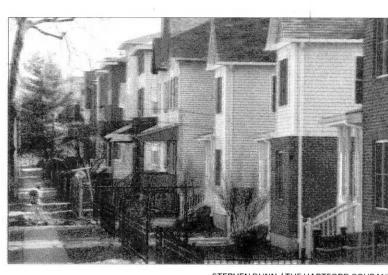
SELLING HARTFORD AS HOME



STEPHEN DUNN / THE HARTFORD COURAN

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.

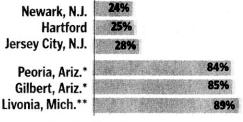


CARPENTER JEFFREY MASTRO puts finishing touces on windows in a Frog Hollow house that is part of the Cityscape housing revitalization program.

Mayor Bent On Raising Homeownership Rate

Best and worst

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



* Suburbs of Phoenix; ** Suburb of Detroit SOURCE: 2000 Census THE HARTFORD COURANT

By MIKE SWIFT COURANT STAFF WRITER

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 chil-"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.



MARK MIRKO / THE HARTFORD COURANT