Hartford

New England's Rising Star℠

SUMMER 2006

Eddie A. Perez, Mayor

The Mayor's UPDATE

Hartford is growing financially stronger every year. We have kept our "A" Bond rating by:

1.) Trimming waste in government
2.) Fully funding our pension obligations
3.) Generating extra revenue for city services
4.) Increasing accountability
5.) Growing small business
6.) Providing more homeownership opportunities

There are more than 1,200 new homeowners in the city since I took office and we can't turn back now. **Homeownership increases property values, decreases crime, and attracts more economic development.**

However, I can't allow our homeowners – the poorest in the state – to pay more than their fair share for Hartford's revitalization effort. Hartford is New England's Rising Star – it shouldn't be the city of soaring taxes.

This past Legislative session, I continued to fight for homeowners by trying to prevent shifting the tax burden from businesses to homeowners. Hartford homeowners already pay 6% of their income on taxes, as opposed to the statewide average of 4%. The tax issue is also challenging for the Capital City because of the $2 billion in exempt properties, like churches and state government buildings. In fact, the value of exempt properties in Hartford equals the taxable grand list of the average town in Connecticut. We need to strike a balance without balancing the budget on the backs of homeowners. **You need to let your state lawmakers know that we need a permanent solution next session, not just a short-term fix.**

This year's City budget puts more financial muscle behind two of Hartford's top priorities: Public Safety and Education. Putting more police officers on the street combats crime head-on and training more firefighters strengthens our response to emergencies. Also, raising the bar on the quality of education and improving the facilities in which our children learn, increases the potential earning power for the next generation of Hartford residents.

These are the kind of improvements that make our neighborhoods strong and vibrant. Work with me for tax justice. Call your state lawmakers. **Hartford's future is now!**

Sincerely,

Eddie A. Perez
Mayor

550 Main Street • Hartford, CT 06103 • Tel. (860) 543-8500 • Fax (860) 722-6606
www.hartford.gov

THE NEW BUT FAMILIAR FACE *of Crime Fighting in Hartford...*

Mayor Perez, Chief Roberts, and Majority Leader rJo Winch display the "team symbol" as Chief Roberts takes the reigns of the HPD.

Mayor Perez is proud to announce that a "Son of Hartford" is now the new Chief at the Hartford Police Department. Chief Daryl K. Roberts says, "It takes all of us" to make Hartford a safer place for our families.

Chief Roberts is a 24-year veteran of the force and one of the architects of the City's Neighborhood Policing Plan, which promotes stronger relationships between the community and the officers. He has also commanded every major division of the department. Chief Roberts takes over the helm from Chief Patrick Harnett, who is retiring.

Mayor Perez says, "Chief Harnett instilled a new sense of pride and purpose in our police department. Every officer at every rank is now focused on working with and responding to issues of community concern to improve the quality of life and to reduce crime. The appointment of Chief Roberts is a continuation of the new direction. Accountability, effective crime reduction, and collaboration with the community are keys to how he will uphold our proud values and high standards. Additionally, Chief Robert's personal story and record of achievement are an inspiration to the youth of Hartford."

...and a renewed sense of community!

Mayor Perez is uniting "an army of people of faith" during his summer long church tour. The Mayor wants clergy and congregations to be more involved in the lives of Hartford youngsters.

Mayor Perez says, "Adults need to be positive role models and help our youth make positive choices. Our places of worship are excellent resources for that. People provide leadership and the facility itself can house programs or neighborhood meetings. Caring adults made the difference in my life. I want today's young people to walk through the same door of opportunity that I did."

Mayor Perez will be visiting a variety of places worship through Labor Day Weekend.

Mayor Perez at Liberty Christian Center in the Upper Albany neighborhood

Labor Peace = Responsible Development

When your tax dollars are used to build beautiful buildings that attract business and change the city's skyline, you expect a commitment to the community. To Mayor Perez, that commitment translates to jobs for city residents that pay good wages and provide health care benefits.

The City of Hartford is taking a tough stance to make sure the owners of the Marriott Hotel and Connecticut Convention Center meet that obligation to Hartford residents. It comes in the form of a law called the Living Wage Ordinance.

A crucial component of that law is called Labor Peace. Labor Peace simply means there's an agreement that business will not lock out workers and that workers will not strike. Mayor Perez says, "The groups involved all need to come to the table to iron out a process for a labor vote. Disputes between management and labor harm business and undermine the city's investment of tax dollars."

In this case, the developer of the two facilities received $15-30 million in tax breaks. Mayor Perez says what's fair is fair. All he wants to see is that Hartford residents get a break with good wages, health benefits, and no worries of being locked out of their job.

NEW COMPUTER CENTER
Promotes Access to Education!

Mayor Perez** and **Major William Bamford,** Salvation Army Divisional Commander checkout the new computer learning opportunities with Hartford youngsters **Keon Huff** and **Quinton James.

Computer literacy opens the doors of opportunity! Mayor Perez is proud to help The Salvation Army and Comcast unveil the new "Comcast Technology Center" located at the Family Resource Center at 123 Sigourney Street in the City's Asylum Hill neighborhood.

The state-of-the-art computers, software and Internet access are available to neighborhood residents and were made possible by a $25,000 grant from Comcast.

Mayor Perez says, "Education = Empowerment. By Comcast being a good corporate neighbor and The Salvation Army being a strong community organization, Hartford seniors, parents, and youngsters have more access to information and 21st Century technology. This helps build a better Hartford!"

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Please email your questions or comments about our newsletter to Sarah Barr, Director of Communications at barrs001@hartford.gov

MAYOR PEREZ JOINS NATIONAL FIGHT TO *Get Illegal Guns off the Streets*

Mayor Perez is fighting to get illegal guns off the streets of Hartford. Recently, he was one of 14 Mayors to attend the nation's first national summit on the issue. It was held in New York City and hosted by Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Boston's Mayor Thomas Menino.

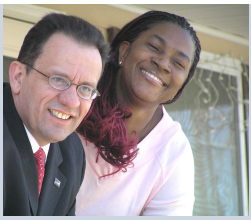
Mayor Perez says, "The sources for illegal guns flowing into Hartford are similar to several other cities. While Hartford's Neighborhood Policing Plan is making positive strides in getting these weapons off our streets, it is engaging to hear innovative ideas from my colleagues. Joint efforts and cooperative strategies will benefit all of our residents. If the Federal and State governments aren't going to take the lead on this important issue, then leaders of municipalities will."

Last year alone, HPD recovered 350 illegal guns and got them off the streets of Hartford. **Mayor Perez continues to fight for tougher state gun legislation requiring gun owners to report lost or stolen firearms within 72 hours.**

HARTFORD IS BUILDING UP AND PEOPLE ARE MOVING IN!

Mayor Perez, city and state officials applaud Providian Builders for completing 23 single-family townhouses on Alden Street in the South Green neighborhood.

Mayor Perez says, "This is the largest housing development here in quite sometime. The million dollar investment, including $500,000 from the City of Hartford in GAP funding, is a great complement to our other developments, including Dutch Point, Pearl Street and Capewell."



Mayor Perez is proud to recognize the launching of a new, locally produced homeownership magazine. *"The First-Time Home Buyer"* takes an educational approach to help residents get the information needed to secure a portion of the American Dream.

Mayor Perez says, "This is a tremendous step in the right direction in a city that has one of the lowest homeownership rates in the country. By empowering people with information and affordable housing choices, together we can continue to increase these opportunities for people of all incomes."

Mayor Perez is pictured with new homeowner Angela Cargill of Hartford's Northeast neighborhood.

HARTFORD SEEN BY MILLIONS
During National Puerto Rican Day Parade

Mayor Perez led the floats and fanfare as the State Marshall of this year's National Puerto Rican Day Parade in New York City. Connecticut was the featured State in this fun-filled event. 12 million people watched on television as this four-hour extravaganza made it's way down 5th Avenue. About four million parade goers cheered on the City of Hartford from the sidelines. This event took place one week after Connecticut's own Puerto Rican Day Parade, which returned to Hartford to honor history, heritage, and cultural contributions.

HARTFORD PAYS TRIBUTE TO PIONEER

Mayor Perez took part in an emotional tree dedication ceremony for Olga Mele, considered to be the Matriarch of Hartford's Puerto Rican and Hispanic Community.

She was in the forefront on the issues of housing, jobs, and medical care. The ceremony in her honor took place at Bushnell Park (between the Carousel and the Pond) in Downtown Hartford.

A plaque now bears the name of this remarkable woman whose memory will thrive like the tree that was planted.

HARTFORD'S RETIRING STAR

Hartford is New England's Rising Star, but in May we saw one of our shining stars retire. Councilman Hernan LaFontaine stepped down after a distinguished career in public service through government and education. Elected to Hartford City Council in 2001 as part of "Team Perez", he has worked diligently to help improve the quality of life for all of Hartford's residents. Part of Mr. LaFontaine's history-making career includes being the City's first President of City Council under the new charter. LaFontaine is pictured here with Mayor Perez and Councilman Calixto Torres.

Pedro Segarra, an attorney and former Corporation Counsel for the City of Hartford, has replaced Mr. LaFontaine on City Council.

***Mayor Perez** and **Kevin Ollie** sign books to encourage youngsters to graduate from college.*

Prepare today FOR COLLEGE TOMORROW

Mayor Eddie Perez, NBA and former UCONN standout Kevin Ollie, Hartford Public Schools, the Foundation for Excellent Schools (FES), and hundreds of "Goodwill Ambassadors" from the community took part in the third annual Early College Awareness Day in the Capital City. The goal is to increase the number of Hartford students who graduate from a 4-year college program, in order to better compete in our global economy.

Mayor Perez says, "You can feel the excitement in every school and see the inspiration in every child's face. I always enjoy hearing kids say that they know what they want to be when they grow up and they know they need to graduate from college in order to make that dream come true. It is never too early to start planning for college. Early College Awareness Day reinforces our educational vision for the City."

Kevin Ollie says, "My mother always tells me that her proudest moment of me is not scoring points on the basketball court but it was when I walked across the stage and accepted my diploma."

All 35 Hartford Public Schools participated in the event, complete with pep rallies, assemblies, classroom discussions, interactive games and events, and essay contest winners.

MANDATORY SCHOOL UNIFORMS

Starting this fall for grades PreK-8

Starting September 5, 2006, all Hartford Public School students in grades PreK-8 will be required to wear school uniforms. Overwhelming community support led the Board of Education passing this new mandatory policy. These Hartford Public School students model the kind of uniforms that will be required.

Mayor Perez says, "As Chairman of the Board of Education, I am a firm believer that mandatory uniforms increase learning and decrease distractions."

For more information, log on to **www.hartford.gov,** select "Hartford Public Schools" and then click on "uniform flyer" or call your school.

HARTFORD COMMUNITIES COME TOGETHER!