

What's New on HartfordInfo.org?



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New Reports!

Check out a new report on recent college graduates and the great recession.

New Articles!

Common Ground is working to convert a factory to a social incubator.

New Videos!

Check out our new video from a program, *Promoting Peace*.

Over 100 people came together for the Community Dialogue Action Forum on Adult Learning on May 15.

This newsletter provides periodic updates about recent additions to HartfordInfo.org. Please feel free to forward this message to others. To be added to the distribution list send an email message through our [feedback page](#).

HartfordInfo.org, a program of the Hartford Public Library, is a gateway to information and data on issues important to those who live and work in Hartford and the region.

New Data, Maps, and Video

- **Interactive Voting Widget** — HartfordInfo.org has developed a "widget" which will allow users to use interactive mapping to explore data about voting in Hartford. The widget narrows the number of data layers that are available while maintaining interactivity, such as zooming and panning (moving the map left or right). [Click here for the widget](#).
- **Community Dialogue Action Forum on Adult Learning** — Video of the May 15, 2012 program held at the Hartford Public Library. [Click here for the video](#).
- **Poverty, Peace, Planet Earth and the Prophetic Voice: Promoting Peace** — Video of the April 24, 2012 program held at the Hartford Public Library. [Click here for the video](#).

New Reports

- **Chasing the American Dream: Recent College Graduates and the Great Recession** — This report includes the results of a survey of graduates from four-year colleges and universities from the classes of 2006 through 2011. It documents the difficulties young people encountered as they entered a turbulent labor market and recession. [Click here for the report](#).
- **Funding A Better Education: Conclusions From The First Three Years Of Student-Based Budgeting In Hartford** — Hartford's implementation of student-based budgeting represents a complete overhaul of the district's old system and has had a measurably positive impact on schools. Implementation has not been without its challenges, however, and is still a work in progress. [Click here for the report](#).
- **Latino Community Socio-Economic Study** — Connecticut's fast-growing Latino community has suffered tremendously during the economic downturn. That certainly is not a surprise. However, the full dimension of the impact, affecting virtually every aspect of daily life, is quite alarming. New survey data demonstrates the full extent of

the crisis, in the voices of people who are navigating tough times and dealing with extensive and pervasive damage to their quality of life. [Click here for the report.](#)

- **Framework for Connecticut's Fiscal Future: Part 4: Improving Delivery of Public Services** — The Connecticut Institute for the 21st Century has been tracking the state's continuing battle to wrestle with the growing fiscal and economic crisis. In this, the 4th part of the series, the focus is on the delivery of public services. The continuing economic downturn creates increased need for public services while sharply reducing state revenues. [Click here for the report.](#)
- **Gender and Racial Composition of CT Boards & Commissions** — The Connecticut Office of the Secretary of the State voluntarily publishes a statistical report on the gender and racial composition of state boards and commissions every two years. This year's report presents data submitted in 2011 by 175 state boards, commissions, committees and councils. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Locating American Manufacturing: Trends in the Geography of Production** — With the slight resurgence of U.S. manufacturing in the recent years, it is important to consider not just the future of manufacturing in America but also its geography. Geographic considerations are, in fact, central to whether the slow growth of U.S. manufacturing jobs during the last two years signals a renaissance of American manufacturing or merely a temporary respite from long-term decline. [Click here for the report.](#)
- **Housing Costs, Zoning, and Access to High-Scoring Schools** — This report suggests that as the nation grapples with the growing gap between rich and poor and an economy increasingly reliant on formal education, public policies should address housing market regulations that prohibit all but the very affluent from enrolling their children in high-scoring public schools in order to promote individual social mobility and broader economic security. [Click here for the report.](#)

New Articles

Big Ideas

- **Turning North End Factory Into An Engine Of Change** — Rosanne Haggerty's organization, Common Ground, recently acquired the former M. Swift & Sons gold-leaf factory in the North End and plan to renovate it to be a business and social incubator that includes businesses that share space and equipment, an education or training component, a focus on local and sustainable jobs as well as supportive housing. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **At MetroHartford Alliance, A Young Man Nurtures His Passion For The City** — Julio Concepcion, of MetroHartford Alliance knows how Hartford ticks. He is the liaison between the city, its businesses and neighborhoods. While his job doesn't require him to be a fly on the wall at countless municipal functions, he enjoys being involved and informed. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Still Revolutionary: \$27 Million State Tourism Campaign Launched** — The new tourism slogan — "Connecticut: Still Revolutionary" — could boost history-related attractions, but it's also meant to remind residents and visitors that the state is a leader in the arts, science and engineering, and civil rights. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **New Regional Development Agency: Broader Vision, Power Base** — A new regional economic development authority created in the just-ended legislative session gives a voice to Hartford and East Hartford officials on its board, a perspective that was lacking in the organization that it will replace. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Move Workers To Pearl Street, Turn Park Buildings Into High-End Housing** — Pearl Street between Main and Trumbull streets is a forlorn and uninviting pocket of downtown Hartford, in large part because of two adjacent, long-vacant, 1960s-era office buildings at 95-101 and 111 Pearl St. Last year, city and state officials decided to work together to do something about these sad-looking edifices. That's good; this could be a spectacular opportunity — but not the way they are doing it. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **New Hartford Police Plan Breaks The Silos** — Many have wondered why Hartford can't get its crime problem under better control, when the city is relatively small and presumably manageable. One reason is that the responsible agencies don't always work together. Acting police chief James Rovella learned this lesson when named to head the Hartford Shooting Task Force last year. He saw that too many agencies weren't talking to one another, and that they were much more effective when they did. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Hartford's iQuilt Plan Isn't A Home Run, And Maybe That's Just What City Needs** — Rick Green writes that iQuilt, a streets-and-parks improvement project backed by arts groups and local government that has huge potential, could cost as much as \$100 million. Luckily, though, this save-Hartford strategy might be different from past efforts. The pay-as-you-go tactic of iQuilt — essentially an urban plan for Hartford — might offer a more practical approach for a capitol city that has spent the last few decades paying big and still missing when it comes to renewal. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Stop The Hartford Shootings By Going Beyond Cops** — In crime as elsewhere, statistics have the power to mislead. This week, the city put out a press release saying Hartford was No. 1 in the state in the seizure of illegal weapons. But, the numbers don't tell people what they really want to know, which is whether or not the city is safer. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **After More Than 12 Years, Work Starts In Earnest On Busway** — It took three governors, more than a dozen years, and the pledge of better than \$400 million in federal aid, but construction of the New Britain-to-Hartford busway officially began recently. [Click here for the article.](#)

Good News

- **This Just In: Hartford Coming Back To Life** — Not too long ago, the streets of downtown Hartford were largely empty after business hours. But things slowly are a'changing. There are now people out walking dogs and going for coffee. Downtown is waking from the dead. It's not Times Square, but it is better than it was. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **University of Hartford Grad Has A South Carolina Lawyer To Thank** — Nicole Suissa, a University of Hartford freshman has a stranger to thank for funding most of her college education. J. Edward Bell III, a Georgetown, S.C., lawyer, heard Suissa speak about her financial plight and the likelihood that she would have to drop out of school in a special report that aired on CNN on Feb. 26, 2009. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Meeting Dr. Maya Angelou** — One of Maya Angelou's poems provided motivation and affirmation in this young woman's journey. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **After Capitol West: A New View Of Hartford's Asylum Hill** — No one at the recent ceremony marking the end of Hartford's Capitol West was at all sorry to see that the notorious eyesore would be knocked into rubble in the coming weeks. Not the least of which was Bernie Michel. Michel, the chairman of the neighborhood revitalization zone in Asylum Hill, said the razing of the building would do two things: open up a pleasing vista for motorists on I-84 west and convey that the city cares about what perception it projects. [Click here for the article.](#)

Neighborhoods

- **Bringing Back Hartford's Asylum Hill One Home At A Time** — Northside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance, since 2004 has been resurrecting some of Hartford's older housing stock in the Asylum Hill neighborhood. Through a unique partnership with other nonprofits, volunteer and apprentice construction workers, and a rigorous collection of available grants, NINA is bringing Asylum Hill back, one dwelling at a time. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Chance Of A Lifetime** — Done with verve and imagination, the new development of Westbrook Village and Bowles Park housing projects can change the area for the better, even change the image of the city. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Picking Fresh** — Katie Martin, an assistant professor in residence at the University of Connecticut's department of allied health sciences. recently completed a study that looked at the produce sections of 19 small neighborhood food stores in Hartford and their customers' shopping habits. The study found that for each additional type of fruit that was stocked in a store, customers were 12 percent more likely to buy fruit. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Firms Offer \$10,000 Grants To Own Homes In Hartford** — Five Hartford corporations are now offering grants to their employees as part of a new home-ownership incentive program launched by MetroHartford Alliance. MetroHartford created the program as part of its LiveHartford Initiative, which promotes city living by offering tours of available homes and apartments and provides information about renting or purchasing a home. [Click here for the article.](#)
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Arts and Culture

- **Wadsworth Atheneum Renovations: Firming Up Foundations For The Future** — The Wadsworth Atheneum, the nation's oldest public art museum, has spent the last few years getting back to basics, shoring up its foundations. The intent is to restore every square foot of gallery space in the 1842 museum, which recently received \$2 million from the state bond commission to kick-start phase two of a two-part renovation now focusing on storage. It's not headline-grabbing, but museum officials are fine with that. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **The Bushnell Eyes Expansion, Possible Development** — The Bushnell is tuning up its finances with the hope of orchestrating a growth spurt that would make the nonprofit arts organization a major force in a downtown Hartford renaissance. [Click here for the article.](#)

Education and Youth

- **First Graduating Class Shows If Students Have The Will, This Program Can Find A Way** — The first graduating class of the Hartford Youth Scholars Foundation is headed off to college. Of the original 31, 21 will attend school in the fall. An additional 75 students are in the pipeline. The catch? None of this is about luck. It takes a lot of work, scholarships and money. The plan was to get as many of the students as possible into Connecticut prep schools. Over time, it evolved into also helping students who stayed at public high schools in Hartford. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Can Hartford Afford Its 50-Plus Schools?** — At some point, Hartford city leaders are going to have to ask how many schools Hartford can absorb. Connecticut's cities and towns are heavily reliant on local property taxes. At 18 square miles, Hartford starts out with relatively little real property, and 52 percent of the land it does have is tax-exempt. The city's board of education now has 43 school buildings and two administrative buildings. Add another half-dozen CREC schools, and a handful of religious and private schools, and the city has well over 50 elementary and secondary schools. [Click here for the article.](#)

- **Superintendent Plans \$5,000 College Scholarships For Hartford Students** — Superintendent Christina Kishimoto announced a \$12 million capital campaign recently that will ask the city's corporate leaders and philanthropists to help Hartford graduates pay for college. Click here for the article. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Ten Lessons Learned Along Road To School Reform** — It was an inspirational photo opportunity at the signing of the long-awaited education reform bill at the Capitol when Gov. Dannel P. Malloy declared "the long debate is over and the new beginning has just begun." But what have we really accomplished with all this talk about how to fix Connecticut's lowest-performing schools? What lessons were learned in the much-hyped year of education reform? [Click here for the article.](#)
- **School Reform Misses Interdistrict Opportunities** — Conspicuously absent from the General Assembly's recent debate over education reform and the need to close the state's worst in the nation achievement gap between poor and more affluent students was any mention of the Connecticut Supreme Court's decision in the Sheff v. O'Neill desegregation case and its constitutional mandate for quality integrated education. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Commissioner: What Education Reform Means** — Stefan Pryor, commissioner of the state Department of Education, writes that the Connecticut General Assembly recently passed, and Gov. Dannel P. Malloy signed, one of the most comprehensive pieces of education legislation this state has seen in a generation. The law is a victory for our state's students, parents, teachers and administrators. [Click here for the article.](#)

Economic Development

- **CT Small Biz Microloan Program Growing** — Connecticut is growing a federal program offering small businesses alternatives to bank financing. The Hartford Economic Development Corp. recently became the third U.S. Small Business Administration micro lender, providing loans of up to \$50,000 to companies struggling to raise capital through bank lending. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Re-engineering The Workforce** — Thomas Phillips is the master convener of a regional workforce operation that develops skills of the unemployed and underemployed to match available jobs. [Click here for the article.](#)

Hartford History

- **Distressed Graveyard Honors Our Past, Epitomizes Our Present** — Hartford's Old North Cemetery, a place of forlorn but enduring beauty, is where you will find the graves of some of Connecticut's most illustrious historic names: Wadsworth, Watkinson, Bushnell, Ellsworth, Olmsted. So too are Revolutionary and Civil War veterans, governors and congressmen. There are African-Americans and Hartford's early Jewish residents, Catholics and all those righteous Protestants who started it all. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **A Scouting Life** — Natalie Phillips, an 88-year-old Hartford resident who's been involved in Scouting for more than 80 years, is just thrilled she survived until the Girl Scouts of the USA's 100th anniversary which occurred recently. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Preserving Historic Buildings Has Handsome Payoff** — Few people ever regret saving a historic building. A preserved and reused structure maintains a tangible tie with local history, retains the aesthetic quality of an area and contributes to our connection with the community, our sense of place. In addition, it turns out, historic preservation makes good economic sense. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Hartford's Long-Planned African American Cultural Center Gets \$1 Million State Grant** — The John E. Rogers African American cultural center planned for the long-abandoned Northwest School building has gotten a huge boost with the approval of a \$1 million state grant. The money, approved by the State Bond Commission earlier this month, will be used to help renovate the old school on Albany Avenue, which was built in 1891. [Click here for the article.](#)

Notable Transitions

- **Merva Jackson: An Advocate For African Caribbean Community And The Disabled** — A college internship led Merva Jackson to her real calling: helping parents of children with disabilities learn how to get appropriate help. In 1999, the Hartford resident created African Caribbean American Parents of Children with Disabilities (AFCAMP), which, by offering parents training in advocacy, networking and lobbying, has helped thousands of children obtain the special education services they need. Jackson, 51, died on April 4, 2012. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Cotto To Resign From Hartford City Council** — City Councilman Luis Cotto, a member of the Working Families Party who is serving his second term on council, said recently he would resign effective July 31, 2012. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Gregory R. Tate** — On June 3, 2012, Gregory R. Tate, 60, died from lung cancer. Tate was a commanding presence in Hartford and its theater scene. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Trail-Blazing Former Hartford Mayor Ann Uccello Turns 90** — As the story goes, the young executive at G. Fox went to her boss, Beatrice Fox Auerbach, in 1963 and said she'd like to run for Hartford city council. Since the council met on Mondays, a day the famed department store was closed, Mrs. A gave her blessing. What followed was one of the most remarkable — if all too brief — political careers in Hartford history. The woman was Ann Uccello, a daughter of Italian immigrants and a Republican. she was the first woman to serve as mayor of a capital city in the country. Miss Uccello turned 90 recently. [Click here for the article.](#)

Other Major Developments

- **Sentencing Modification For Juveniles Is A Start** — Hartford's outgoing state representative Marie Kirkley-Bey might have done at least one good thing this year: co-sponsoring House Bill 5546, an Act Concerning Sentence Modification for Juveniles. [Click here for the article.](#)
- **Hartford GOP On The Rise** — After losing all three seats on the City Council to the Working Families Party, the Hartford G.O.P. took stock and decided to make major changes that would make the party competitive again. The apparent weaknesses were evident: a small town committee, few younger people and a lack of diversity. [Click here for the article.](#)



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