

MetroHartford Alliance/Greater Hartford County

Metro Hartford - the revenant! Forging new opportunities for development

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MetroHartford
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According to one definition in the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the word *revenant* means “a return after a long absence.” The word *revenant* is derived from the Latin word *reveniens*, meaning “returning.”

Recently I took some time off, which gave me the opportunity to see a movie. Not really knowing much about *The Revenant*, I headed out to

As we, the new pioneers, return from a perceived “long absence” of economic growth, we are taking the risks to build a better place to live, work, play, start and grow a business, and raise a family. Connecticut and the Hartford region are far from invisible: We are forging new opportunities for development and a thriving economy. We have truly returned.

my local theater (don't worry, I won't spoil it!) It takes place on the frontier in the early 1800s, a wild time in our country's history when opportunities were there for the taking. Although this period was brutal and hard, it forged the direction of the U.S. – and it led to more prosperous times for Connecticut.

Led by inventors Colt, Pratt, Whitney and Stanley among others, Connecticut's manufacturers made their mark in history and played an important role in our state's industrial dominance. From precision manufacturing of machines, gauges and jigs to educational toys, chemistry sets, microscopes and toy trains,

Connecticut continues to lead the world in manufacturing innovation.

So what does that have to do with real estate – and what does it have to do with *revenant*?

While driving to see the movie, I passed an open field where several people were braving the winter cold to pound flagged stakes into the hardened soil, marking new borders in the ground. Behind them followed a group putting up silt fencing, and nearby were large dozers, backhoes and excavators. The heavy machinery could only mean one thing: new development.

Not unlike 19th century pioneers who were forced to persevere through many hardships, Connecticut has

seen hardships and continues to push through. There has been a long absence of development activity in this region, but now I see a new excitement building with the possibility of new growth. Giving up is not an option – it's not in our state's DNA. We are fighting our way back to a better place.

For example, did we give up when a major property owner vacated its building in Simsbury? No, the town and the region worked to find another use for the property. Today, great plans are in the works to support further mixed-use development. Between Simsbury and Avon, there are also approved plans for a mixed-use development including retail, medical and office space, 180 residential units, and even a grocery store.

Heading toward the east, you come to Rocky Hill and the future home of Town Center West. With more than 50% of the retail/restaurant pads under contract, the 144 luxury housing units are sure to fill up fast with new pioneers.

Look between the two mountain ranges and you find the Connecticut River Valley open to new possibilities. Winding along the riverfront from the Massachusetts border down through the Hartford region, old mills are being revitalized for modern housing. Traditional Main St. retail is being updated with new boutiques for our growing Millennial population.

Right at the center of this region is the renaissance in downtown Hartford. The urban core of our region is implementing new zoning. The structure of the new Minor League Baseball stadium is rising; a Hard Rock Hotel has been approved; and the iQuilt Plan to reconnect Bushnell Park to the riverfront is drawing new investment to the city. A newly elected, energetic Mayor is reaching beyond the city limits to engage and promote a stronger region.

It's not just in the movies that I see new ground being broken. Every day, right here in our region, I see positive change happening. As we, the new pioneers, return from a perceived “long absence” of economic growth, we are taking the risks to build a better place to live, work, play, start and grow a business, and raise a family. Connecticut and the Hartford region are far from invisible: We are forging new opportunities for development and a thriving economy. We have truly returned.

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Competing for Jobs, Capital & Talent

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The MetroHartford Alliance serves as the economic development leader for the Hartford Region and as the City's Chamber of Commerce. The Alliance's mission is to ensure that the City and Region **compete** aggressively and successfully for jobs, capital and talent so that they remain premier places for all people to live, play, work, start and grow a business, and raise a family.

To achieve that mission, the Alliance serves as the strategic convener of the Region's investors, stakeholders and other interested parties to accomplish critical objectives that require collaboration.

