

# in the Loop

## Grandeur Restored: 960 Main Brings Past Alive, Focuses on Future

Hartford native Debbie Waterhouse fondly remembers the annual trips to the G. Fox Department Store to see the elaborate Christmas tree decorations above the marquee. And she'll never forget shopping at G. Fox – the grand dame of Hartford department stores.

It's no surprise, then, that Waterhouse considers herself fortunate to now be serving as the building's manager as part of 960 Main LLC. Under her watchful eye, the building was recently renovated to reflect its original art deco grandeur. A Hartford Steam steam and chilled-water customer, the former G. Fox building now houses 960 Main – featuring commercial offices, retail, entertainment venues and restaurants – as well as Capital Community College at 950 Main Street.



The current owners restored the former G. Fox Department Store building to its original art deco design, as reflected in the Main Street lobby.

think many were relieved the new owners honored its history and brought pride back to our downtown area.”

Sixty percent of the former store – or about 500,000 sq ft – is designated as 960 Main and is filling up rapidly with new tenants. (The balance houses Capital Community College.) The Mezzanine, which opened in December, features live music and serves a light dinner fare Wednesday through Friday. Room 960 is a “hip metropolitan lounge” with national DJs playing techno music for a young, energetic crowd. According to *Hartford Magazine* “Who knew an old department store would one day be the coolest place to stay up late?”

That's not to say that the 11-story 960 Main isn't plenty busy during the day as well. You can purchase fashion accessories, gifts, jewelry, artwork and even upscale office furniture, plus there will soon be several more restaurants to tempt your palette. Current commercial tenants include the State of Connecticut Insurance Department, the Hartford Board of Education and Comcast.

Previously the building's telecommunication tenants used their own chillers rather than district cooling via the building, feeling they needed even more reliability given the critical nature of their businesses. Recently, however, Comcast renewed its lease and decided to switch over to the district cooling loop. “It's really a testament to how reliable Hartford Steam has been over the years,” says Waterhouse. “The telecom tenants are seeing a strong history of reliability, so they are comfortable with making Hartford Steam their main cooling source. The on-site chillers will remain in place only for redundancy purposes.”

All building tenants and visitors have easy access to an attached parking garage that is connected via a skywalk, plus a nearby parking garage was recently redeveloped. In fact the

*continued*



Courtesy 960 Main LLC.

**960 Main, part of the former G. Fox Department Store building, is busy both day and night. It is a cornerstone of downtown Hartford's renaissance.**

“G. Fox brings a nostalgic feeling among those of us who grew up in Hartford,” says Waterhouse. “As a result, people are pleased that something wonderful has been done with the building. It was vacant for 10 years before the restoration, so I

whole area is getting a facelift, with another former department store under renovation and new retail and residential units opening up across the street.

Restoring the former G. Fox was the first of the Six Pillars of Progress planned by the State of Connecticut in the redevelopment of downtown Hartford, and the strategy appears to be working. Designed by architect Cass Gilbert shortly after he designed the Woolworth Tower in New York City, the building held its grand opening in 1917 – and now, nearly 90 years later – it has stood the test of time and promises to shine as part of downtown Hartford’s renaissance.

## True to Her Heritage and to Hartford Steam

When she arrived in the United States from Portugal in 1978, Maria Isabel Seguro did not know what was ahead of her. But 28 years later, Maria can confidently say she’s happy with the outcome and with her job at The Hartford Steam Co.

Maria started with Hartford Steam in 1984 as a co-op student, serving as the receptionist. Six months later, the company recognized her skills and asked her to stay on to help them computerize their office. As it turns out, that was just the beginning.

Since then, Maria has held a number of positions and has been through a number of acquisitions with the company, all the while staying true to Hartford Steam. “I’ve grown with the company,” says Maria. “In a big company, there are a lot of people doing one function. In a smaller company like ours, one person does a lot of things and I like that. You have more control of the work that you do, and you can better understand how the company operates. It’s more interesting.” Maria currently handles

purchasing, accounts payable and receivable, and special billings.

Maria proudly became a U.S. citizen on Election Day in November 1992, two years after she was married. Now, with two children, Maria feels it is important to instill in them their Portugese heritage. “It can be hard to do,” says Maria, “but they are starting to appreciate it. They enjoyed following Portugal’s World Cup team,



**Maria Isabel Seguro started with Hartford Steam as a co-op student in 1984.**

especially because it gave them a chance to wear the team’s caps and shirts!”

Originally from a town just north of Lisbon, Maria and her family have traveled to her homeland several times. Her parents are visiting Portugal for the summer and she, too, looks forward to sharing another trip with her husband and sons to the land of her heritage.

## Get Ready for the Heating Season

It may be hot now, but in just a few months, low temperatures will be here to stay. So it is time to start planning for winter and getting your heating system in order. Visit [www.hartfordsteam.com/seasonal.htm](http://www.hartfordsteam.com/seasonal.htm) for timely tips to make sure you’re ready for the steam heating season.

## Here’s How to Find Us



Although Hartford Steam is located at 60 Columbus Blvd., there is currently no access through the Columbus Blvd. gate. Please use the back entrance at the intersection of Taylor & Sheldon streets and cross the Commerce Street Bridge. Look for the signs for TEN Co. Inc.

## Some Industry Advice

*District Energy* magazine, a quarterly publication of the International District Energy Association, features a column called “Inside Insights,” which addresses common operating issues for customers using district heating and cooling service. Hartford Steam has posted the most recent column, “Variable Speed Pumping: How low can you go?,” at [www.hartfordsteam.com/resources.htm](http://www.hartfordsteam.com/resources.htm) for your use and reference. Check it out!

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[www.hartfordsteam.com](http://www.hartfordsteam.com)

For information, call (860) 548-7348.  
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