



Many Heading To D.C. Even Though They Lack Inauguration Tickets

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Thousands of people with no inauguration tickets - and little hope of finding any - are chartering buses, planning road trips and scrambling for flights to Washington because they are determined to witness the beginning of Barack Obama's presidency.

"One way or another, we're going to be there," said Earl Heard, 56, of Gadsden, Ala. His wife, Anna, booked a hotel room before the election, but he admits that their chances of finding tickets are "slim to none."

James Linton, 43, a businessman from Louisville, Ky., chartered 33 buses to bring more than 1,800 people to the Jan. 20 festivities. Each person paid \$300 for travel and lodging, but Linton has no tickets.

"We're going to stand in the public areas and be a part of history," he said. Demand for tickets far exceeds the 240,000 set aside for distribution. The National Park Service is planning for at least 1 million people.

Most of Washington's 29,000 hotel rooms are booked. The American Bus Association expects a record number of charter buses to converge on the capital. Airlines have added flights.

This is the Super Bowl times 10," said Rick Seaney, CEO of farecompare.com. Heard, who is black, says Obama's election proves to his grandchildren what his parents told him: "You can accomplish anything. The sky's the limit."

Walter Morris, 87, and his wife, Lela, 81, will take the train from El Cerrito, Calif. Obama's win was "beyond my wildest dreams," said Walter Morris, a retired physician who once lived in segregated Washington.

Robert Gregory, 42, a real estate broker from Austin, Texas, has signed up 45 people so far to join him on a chartered bus.

Bill Adkins, 60, pastor of Greater Imani Church in Memphis, Tenn., made hotel and flight reservations before the election.

"I grew up riding in the back of the bus," he said. "If God allows me to be alive on Jan. 20, I will be there."