

D.C. readies for record-breaking inauguration

By James Wright
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) — If you live in the nation's capital and have a spare room or guest house, you can legally rent out your property instead of providing a free sleepover for visitors in town for the historic Jan. 20 inauguration of the 44th president of the United States.

Washington, D.C. Mayor Adrian Fenty (D) used his ex-

ecutive powers to suspend city regulations and allow residents to rent their properties for the inauguration week without a business license.

The suspended regulation begins on Jan. 13 and runs through the 27th.

Fenty said that the city is expecting as many as 4 million people during the historic inauguration of Barack Obama. If even half that

number shows up, it will bypass the 1.2 million that saw President Lyndon Johnson and Vice President Hubert Humphrey take their oaths in 1965, according to officials.

The suspension was the result of record demand for housing because all of the city hotels and motels are booked up. Lodging facilities within the Washington area are experiencing similar demand.

As a result, travelers are making plans to stay with friends or relatives and D.C. residents are advertising their homes on the Internet.

District law normally requires landlords to obtain business licenses from the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs. The licenses cost \$130 to \$303, depending on the number of units and type of building.

Fenty said that the suspen-

sion was necessary. "The government does not have the resources to go around and regulate all of the thousands of deals that are being negotiated," he said at a Nov. 20 press conference, according to the *Washington Post*.

The city's Office of Tax and Revenue also announced it will suspend the 14.5 percent sales tax on property rentals to residents who want to rent their homes to visitors.

However, officials cautioned both potential inaugural landlords and tenants to be specific about price, security deposits, length of stay and other conditions before entering into an agreement. They indicated that a sample contract would be posted on the city's website, <http://DC.gov>.

Fenty's suspension of property rental regulations is the latest development by government officials prepar-

ing to host millions of people from around the world for the inauguration.

In other developments: Washington area U.S. senators and representatives have devised systems to distribute what is expected to be an allotment of 400 tickets, with demands reaching into the thousands.

Maryland U.S. Sens. Barbara Mikulski (D) and Benjamin Cardin (D) have decided to dispense tickets through a random drawing, according to the *Post*.

D.C. Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton has not made a final decision on how to dispense her tickets, her spokeswoman Sonyrea Tate-Montgomery said, but the office is no longer accepting calls or e-mail inquiries about inauguration tickets.

"I share the excitement and enthusiasm of my con-

Inequality nags despite Obama win

WASHINGTON (AP) — The day after Barack Obama was elected president, Kari Fulton heard a White colleague proclaim that racism in America is dead.

She cringed, worrying it might be a sign of flagging interest in the fight against discrimination.

"In reality, racism is still very much alive and well," said Fulton, who graduated last year from Howard University, a historically Black college in the nation's capital.

Obama's election has generated a euphoria among Black Americans that is palpable. For some, the weight of history has finally been eased after generations of struggling for equality. But amid the postelection glow of racial harmony lurks a sobering fact: Racial disparities persist — in just about every measurable form — and they won't simply melt away because the nation has a Black president.

Fulton, 23, was part of a group of young Black activists from across the country who worked to register and turn out young Black voters in the presidential election. The National Coalition on Black Civic Participation brought the group together shortly after the election to learn about converting their enthusiasm into ongoing political activism.

"Election Day was just the beginning," said Fulton, who lives in Washington and works as an organizer for the Environmental Justice and Climate Change Initiative. "People don't expect President Obama to be a superhero. We have to solve our own problems."

The problems are significant.

About a quarter of Black Americans live in poverty — nearly three times the rate for Whites — at a time when rising budget deficits and expensive corporate bailouts

are going to leave little federal money for anti-poverty programs. The federal budget deficit is likely to hit a record \$1 trillion next year.

Black adults are less likely than Whites to have college degrees and more likely to be in prison. Blacks are less likely than Whites to have health insurance and, on average, they don't live as long as Whites. Homicide is the leading cause of death among Black males ages 15 to 34 — and it has been for years.

The good news: Poverty and education levels for Blacks have improved in the past two decades, and incarceration rates for Blacks are dropping even as they increase for Whites.

Still, the income gap has barely changed in 30 years, with a typical Black household making only 62 percent of the income of a typical White household.

Marc Morial, president and CEO of the National Urban League, knows the numbers well. Each year, the civil rights group publishes a book called "The State of Black America," which has chapters of data on disparities between Whites and Blacks.

"A mere election does not change the abject conditions for African-Americans or the 230-plus years of racial injustice," Morial said.

The foreword of the 2007 edition of the book was written by Obama, then the junior senator from Illinois.

"This sad story is a stark reminder that the long march toward true and meaningful equality in America isn't over," Obama wrote. "We have a long way to go."

In his election-night victory speech Obama talked about the historic nature of his election. But he had spent much of the campaign soft-pedaling race; he acknowledged its role in society when asked, but he rarely brought it up on his own.

Nevertheless, many Black Americans, who voted more than 9-to-1 for Obama, have embraced his victory as their own.

"You can never really measure the symbolism of a Barack Obama victory," Morial said. "There is no substitute for this idea of role modeling."

Others didn't greet Obama's election so warmly.

Authorities across the nation have documented alleged hate crimes related to Obama's win. More threats have been directed toward Obama than any president-elect, including writings, Internet postings and other activities, authorities say.

Your Horoscope Says... Dec. 4-10

ARIES

The joy that you get from good results can make you a hero this week. Others will easily see how valuable your soul vibration is to them. It will be easy for them to see why they are glad they know you. Feel pride in your ability to move towards distant goals.

Soul Affirmation: The sunlight of my spirit shines in the land beyond the horizon.

Lucky Numbers: 14, 31, 44

TAURUS

Did you enjoy what flowed in last week? Tell someone about it. Sure you like to gossip. So what. Enjoy going over in conversation what you enjoyed in consciousness last week. Did you make the consciousness into reality? You could have. You still can.

Soul Affirmation: Things are as I know them to be.

Lucky Numbers: 33, 43, 53

GEMINI

Well enough of being satisfied and being still and letting the wealth inside yourself be your joy. Spend some of that wealth. Get into your real bank account. Use some hard cash and buy something to make you look as good as you feel.

Soul Affirmation: Jewelry reflects the beauty of my feelings about myself.

Lucky Numbers: 18, 35, 50

CANCER

You find that waiting pays off, doesn't it. Now is a better time to charge ahead. Good communication is favored. You'll be more convincing. Others are more eager to work with you. Love is easier. Business is easier. People give approval in ways that they would not have last week.

Soul Affirmation: A week of re-

joicing is upon me. I celebrate.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 23, 30

LEO

Sweet sincere emotions can run through you like the odors of different perfumes. Open yourself up and let it flow. If love offers itself this week please accept the offer. Everything is open. Write down what you think of yourself this week. Save it. Make a poster out of it.

Soul Affirmation: Trust gives me a deep sense of peace and joy.

Lucky Numbers: 38, 45, 53

VIRGO

Business as usual is good business. Energy is high. Others give back to you what you gave to them the past few weeks. We hope you were generous because what you get this week will be a multiple of what you bestowed.

Soul Affirmation: I love myself for being myself.

Lucky Numbers: 51, 54, 55

LIBRA

Did joy take a vacation on you? Well, joy is back and ready to unpack. Get the spare room ready or move over and let joy crawl in bed with you. Smile in joy's face and make joy feel at home. Know that you've done good.

Soul Affirmation: Joy is my house guest this week.

Lucky Numbers: 14, 22, 37

SCORPIO

Putting the world back in balance is your chore this week. Cheerfulness has been a little lower on the scale than it should be. You can spread it around lavishly this week. Give some to everyone. The more you give the more you'll get.

Soul Affirmation: Goodness is its own reward.

Lucky Numbers: 15, 34, 48

SAGITTARIUS

Celebrate! It's fall time! Communi-

cations will flow easily for you this week. Dress up and get the weekend started earlier. Social life can take your mind off of heavy subjects. Don't tighten up, brighten up.

Soul Affirmation: I get joy from giving good things.

Lucky Numbers: 2, 12, 16

CAPRICORN

Stay positive on all fronts this week. You'll receive subtle cues this week that will confirm what you already know to be true. Act on your instincts and others will be receptive to your vibes. Even if you feel fleeting moments of uncertainty this week, go with the flow, and be a team player.

Soul Affirmation: This week is the week the Lord has made. I rejoice in it.

Lucky Numbers: 18, 26, 33

AQUARIUS

Your positive energy will spread feverishly among family and friends this week. Your timing is just right because your positive vibes will be the extra nudge someone needs to pull through the week. Your strength and friendship will be tested.

Soul Affirmation: Facing down challenges makes me feel good about myself.

Lucky Numbers: 11, 15, 42

PISCES

Call a family member to ask for a second opinion on something important. A different perspective will give you more options on your action plan. Use your faith to guide you through a mental maze that might stir up confusion.

Soul Affirmation: I smile and trust in the powers beyond myself.

Lucky Numbers: 38, 50, 52

(See Crowds, Page 11)