

<b>The Calgary Herald (Calgary, AB)</b>		Order/Commande
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# Calgary company belle of Obama ball

**GINA TEEL**  
CALGARY HERALD

**C**algary's **Smart Technologies Inc.**, whose interactive whiteboards are known in classrooms and boardrooms worldwide, will be part of the big picture at Tuesday's historic inauguration of U.S. president-elect Barack Obama.

Smart, the privately held inventor of the **Smart Board interactive whiteboard**, said its products will be used to streamline a live feed from the Neighborhood Ball in Washington, where the official inauguration of the 44th U.S. president takes place on Tuesday, to the attendees of the Bronzeville Ball in Chicago, in the historic namesake neighbourhood and community where Obama grew up.

Linda Thomas, Smart's vice-president of marketing, said the company is thrilled to be part of the historic event, via Bronzeville, given Obama's commitment to education technology.

The gig's not bad for business, either. "Chicago has one of the largest populations in the U.S.,

this is a very important event for Chicago, and with president-elect Obama being from Chicago, it's a very good fit for us, and fit for the education community and fit for our business," Thomas said.

Smart, which sells its products in 170 countries, saw its one-millionth **Smart board** come off the line in August.

The company will have three **Smart Board 680i interactive whiteboard** systems and two 117-cm **Smart Board** for flat-panel displays, at the Bronzeville Ball, where 300 people are expected to attend.

One of the whiteboards will be streaming live to the Obama-hosted Neighborhood Ball, as well as other galas in Washington and communities across the U.S., allowing guests to interact with each other.

Another board will show a continuous loop of the taped broadcast of the inauguration and Obama's acceptance speech.

A third will carry live ABC coverage, the company said, while the two remaining products will highlight various community businesses in Bronzeville and be available for attendees to use to

sign or write messages on, which will then be saved digitally.

"The interactivity and the ability for the participants at the ball to write their messages to their friends, capture, save (and) store the messages, is uniquely Smart's product and will be done real time," Thomas said.

The company will also work with an artist to create a commemorative piece using the messages written on the whiteboard.

Debi Andrus, assistant professor of marketing at the University of Calgary's Haskayne School of Business, said Smart's traditional market has been in classrooms and boardrooms, and its involvement in this event shows it's evolving to new business applications.

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# SMART:

## Moving into new area

“This shows how hard they’ve been working to move themselves into a whole new area,” Andrus said.

As events go, the Bronzeville Ball isn’t a bad one to be involved in, given the inauguration is so historic.

People everywhere just want to be part of the event, Andrus said, even if they have to see it through technology or binoculars, and that’s what’s driven the desire to have any way to connect people.

“It reflects the change and it reflects Obama’s philosophy about connecting,

and making sure everybody has access and everybody can see and participate. He’s very inclusive in terms of his philosophy,” she said.

GTEEL@THEHERALD.CANWEST.COM



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**U of C instructor Debi Andrus praises Smart’s marketing move.**