

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**2021 MLK DAY EVENT: WHY WE CAN'T WAIT**

Governor Brown among many who have joined the challenge to read the book

**Rogue Valley, OREGON (January 12, 2021)** — Regional and state leaders are accepting the challenge: Read the book *Why We Can't Wait* by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and become more aware of who Dr. King was, his leadership, and his nonviolent direct action movement toward systemic change—to build communities that are equitable and inclusive. It's a message that is even more relevant today.

This Martin Luther King Jr. Day, January 18, 2021, in place of the in-person community gatherings we have enjoyed in Medford and Ashland for many years, we are creating a live-streamed video program reflecting on the 1960's as documented in the *Why We Can't Wait* book and the parallels of today. The program includes chapter discussions from community members, performances from local artists and community groups, followed by a live panel discussion on the topic, and bringing the challenge forward to all our neighbors in the valley.

"We recognize Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and the message he shares through *Why We Can't Wait*, given all he describes in 1963 is so relevant to our time now," said Vance Beach of [BASE Southern Oregon](#). "We thank the business and community leaders, and elected officials, including Oregon Governor Kate Brown, who have already accepted the challenge. In her challenge video, Governor Brown states, "It is so important at this moment, for Oregon and our country that we all work together to eradicate racism in our systems, in our culture, and our institutions." (Video online at [somlk.org](http://somlk.org))

When you accept the challenge, you can register with Jackson County Library Services' special site: <https://jcls.beanstack.org>.

Continued facilitated discussions will be available throughout 2021 to Southern Oregon community members who register for the challenge. To participate, visit [somlk.org](http://somlk.org) for upcoming sign-ups.

"Why We Can't Wait," the new video, will air at 2PM, Monday, January 18, on Rogue Valley Community Television Prime ([RVTV](#)), on area cable systems (channel 9 or 180), and streamed on Facebook Live @SOMLKDay. The video will be immediately followed by a live panel discussion, featuring guests Dr. Geneva Craig, Civil Rights Leader, and Dr. John L. Dolan, Freedom Rider. The broadcast features an In Memoriam. The video will be closed captioned.

The book is available from your local bookstore, Jackson County Public Library, and as an ebook. We recommend the King Legacy edition, ISBN 9780807001127.

Event sponsors: [BASE Southern Oregon](#), City of Ashland, City of Medford, [Ashland Chamber of Commerce](#), Southern Oregon University, [SOU Digital Media Center / RVTV](#), Medford School District, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Jackson County Library Services, and the Truth & Conciliation Council.

For more information about this and past events visit [somlk.org](http://somlk.org). Follow the event on Facebook/Twitter/Instagram – @SOMLKday #MLKDay2021 #SOCantWait2021