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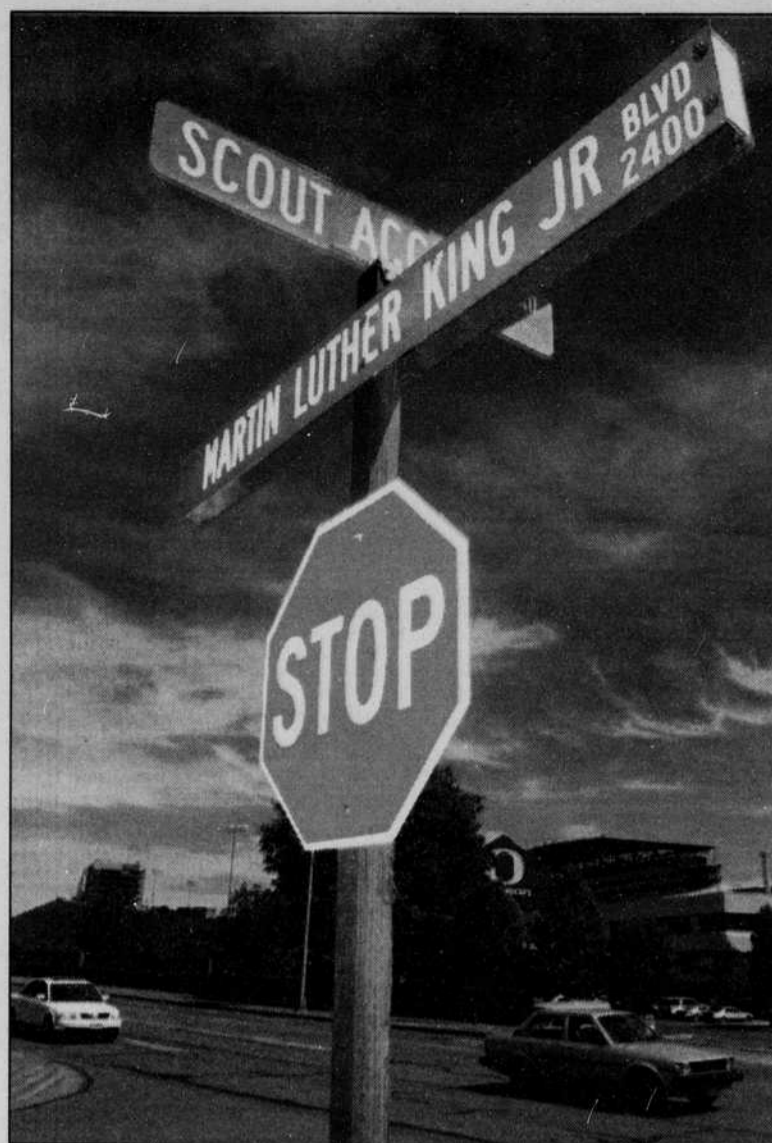
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Erik R. Bishoff Online & Photo Editor

A street sign for Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard sits opposite Autzen stadium at the intersection of South Access Road. The boulevard's name change from Centennial Boulevard, and its proximity to Centennial Loop, continues to cause confusion with mail and deliveries for nearby businesses.

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Check out the September Experience Program

September 7-17, 2004

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ANTH 170	Intro to Human Origins	G. Nelson	45366
GEOG 206	Geography of Oregon	M. Power	45365
HIST 382	Latin America	C. Aguirre	45364
INTL 350	International Leadership	K. Carpenter	45361
PSY 330	Thinking	H. Arrow	45363
PSY 375	Development	J. Measelle	45362
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Businesses adjust to address change

One year after Centennial Boulevard was renamed Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, effects persist

MICHAEL A. BOOTH
FREELANCE REPORTER

Nearly one year after a controversial move by the Eugene City Council to change a two-mile stretch of Centennial Boulevard to Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, the cumulative economic effect on businesses has proved to be negligible.

Of the handful of businesses forced to change their addresses, most business representatives said the address change was little more than a minor setback.

"It was inconvenient but we deal with it OK," said Linda Vonderheit, the business manager at Mercedes of Eugene.

Vonderheit said the costs were not substantial. The hassles related to the address change were similar to those anyone would experience by moving a home or business, she said.

Marl Carter of Staff Jennings Boating Center contends that he incurred "a few thousand dollars worth of expenses" due to the name change, but he said the only additional costs involved were for letterhead and business cards.

"I've still got boxes of office supplies with old addresses on them," Carter said.

During city council deliberations last year, some council members voiced concern about the impact the decision would have on businesses. Many alternatives were proposed, including commissioning a statute to honor the civil rights leader and changing the names of two highways and a bridge that wouldn't require changing addresses. The decision passed 6-2 on deadline day.

Several of the businesses said the

biggest problem caused by the name change stems from out-of-town vendors trying to make deliveries. Vonderheit said truck drivers have had problems looking for the new address.

"The name of Centennial Loop, the cross street, hasn't been changed and I think that causes some confusion when they come off of Coburg Road," Vonderheit said.

"Vendors continue to send mail to our old address ... hopefully they'll make the changes sometime soon."

— Linda Vonderheit
Business Manager / Mercedes of Eugene

An Internet search of four popular Web sites used for maps and directions revealed that only one of the four, Yahoo! Maps, had a listing for Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard in Eugene.

Another concern for businesses is the forwarding of mail. After one year, the post office stops forwarding mail to the new address and starts returning it to the sender. For six months, the post office will attach the forwarding address when returning the mail.

"Vendors continue to send mail to our old address," Vonderheit said. "Hopefully they'll make the changes sometime soon."

Nearly one year after the renaming of Centennial Boulevard, most business owners seem to be quietly resigned about the city council's decision to change their address.

"It was not a popular decision with me but it happened, so there isn't anything I can do about it now," Carter said.

Michael A. Booth is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

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