



BOROUGH OF STATE COLLEGE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Plaza Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at 10 A.M. to be held on August 28

The Borough of State College will be holding an official ribbon cutting ceremony from 10 a.m. to Noon on August 28, 2017, for the opening of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Plaza, the 54th anniversary of the *1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom*, where Dr. King first gave his historic “I Have a Dream” speech. The plaza is located on South Fraser Street, between West College Avenue and West Beaver Avenue. The ribbon cutting ceremony will celebrate the completion of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Plaza, a memorial to remind citizens of Dr. King’s legacy as an advocate for peace, equality, and justice — a legacy that lives on in the State College community and around the world.

The program will begin with Dr. Charles Dumas, Professor Emeritus, Penn State University (PSU) reading a section of Dr. King’s “I Have a Dream” speech. There will also be compelling presentations by Dr. Marcus Whitehurst, Vice Provost, PSU; Dr. Nicholas Jones, Executive Vice President and Provost; PSU and Dr. AnneMarie Mingo, Assistant Professor, PSU. The program will conclude with a speech by Harvard Divinity School Professor, Dr. Preston Williams, who was the associate chaplain at PSU at the time of Dr. King’s visit to PSU in 1965, and the second African American professor to be hired by the university.

At the conclusion of the program, State College Mayor Elizabeth Goreham, will lead in the cutting of an authentic kente cloth to properly open the plaza. Attendees are encouraged to enjoy music and light refreshments in the plaza after the ribbon cutting.

This project began in April 2012, when former Borough Council Member Peter Morris lead the motion to pass Resolution 1066, the renaming of Fraser Plaza to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Plaza. In 2016, Council formed the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Plaza Advisory Committee to begin discussing how to redesign the plaza to better commemorate Dr. King and be an active public place. Later that year, Council awarded the designing and engineering contract to Derck and Edson. This firm held multiple public input sessions to ensure the elements and terminology featured in the plaza properly reflected Dr. King’s legacy and the State College community. Caliber Contracting began construction of the plaza later that year and was finished in early July 2017.

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If you would like more information about the ceremony, or to schedule an interview with representatives from the Borough of State College, please contact Douglas Shontz by phone at 814-278-4723 or by e-mail at engage@statecollegepa.us.