

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant, with news and commentary for Thursday April 21, 2020.

As of this morning, Jefferson County Public Health currently reports 28 confirmed Covid19 cases in our county. Of the 727 tested to date, 696, or 97 percent tested negative, while four percent tested positive for the presence of the virus. Three people are now awaiting test results. These numbers reflect the shortages in availability of Covid19 screening and represent less than 1% of our population tested for Covid19.

The count has stayed at 28 cases for nearly two weeks. This indicates that social distancing practices are working locally, but it's not time to relax. Jefferson County Health Officer Dr. Thomas Locke told the county board of commissioners yesterday that we are in the early stage of this pandemic, and there could be another wave of infection in the next few months.

Locke said the county plans to increase testing, to diagnose all people with respiratory issues, health care and long term care facility workers and first responders.

The COVID-19 emergency has prompted people to follow recommended protocols, and to also notice when others are not doing the same. The state has implemented a way to report violations, while imploring that people do not call 911 to report a neighbor who is seemingly violating any of the protocols.

A list of businesses deemed "essential" can be found at the state website [Coronavirus.wa.gov](https://www.coronavirus.wa.gov). The site includes links to virus statistics, unemployment assistance, advice for those infected, and suggestions on how you can help others. Also, there's a link for reporting evictions, which are prohibited for the duration of the governor's order.

But what's drawn the most attention is a link for reporting nonessential businesses suspected of violating the order. Thousands of people have filed complaints, for which the complainant must give their name for the public record. It's unclear what action will be taken by state government. The site says complaints will be forwarded to "the appropriate agency to review the violation for the appropriate response."

Jefferson County Prosecuting Attorney James Kennedy told KPTZ's Barney Burke that education rather than enforcement is the primary tool to curtail perceived violations. Said Kennedy: "People need to focus on staying healthy and not obsessing with what their neighbors are doing," I don't want people to do things that are going to render their relationships with their neighbors toxic."

Democracy marches on in the face of COVID-19, as we approach what is potentially the most consequential presidential election in history. We'll also have some local excitement, a contested race for the District 2 Jefferson County Commissioner seat

David Sullivan announced his intention to opt out of a fifth term in February, followed by an immediate declaration of candidacy by Cape George resident Lorna Smith. Another candidate emerged this week, as Port Hadlock resident Amanda Funaro announced her intention to run for the open seat. Our sources tell us that it is likely that a third Democratic candidate will emerge, which will set the stage for a primary battle.

On the Republican side, a party official said she expected the party would put forth candidates in the two open commissioner races.

District 1 Commissioner Kate Dean has yet to draw an opponent. Also unopposed is District 2 Public Utility District Commissioner Ken Collins, who seeks a second six year term.

Candidate filing, which can be accomplished online, takes place during the week of May 11. The primary is August 4, at which time the two top vote getters will advance to the November 3 general election, regardless of their party.

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This is Charlie Bermant with some of today's news. Thank you for listening.