

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant, with news and commentary for Tuesday, May 5, 2020.

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As of this morning, Jefferson County Public Health currently reports 28 confirmed COVID-19 cases in our county, a number that has not changed since April 9.

Of the 897 tested to date 851, or 97%, tested negative, while 3% tested positive for the presence of the virus. Sixteen people are now awaiting test results. Testing continues, with Jefferson County Health Officer Dr. Thomas Locke telling the county commissioners that we will soon have the ability to test people who are not symptomatic but with exposure to someone who has contracted the virus.

The county is now preparing the process to request a variance to allow certain activities, a privilege accorded to Jefferson County due to not having any new cases for a two-week period. Locke told the commissioners that it would only take a day or two to prepare this application.

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Jefferson County District 2 Commissioner David Sullivan is retiring after four terms, with a primary challenge in the future as three candidates have already declared for the position. All three are women, and all three are Democrats. There are no declared Republican candidates, but historically that party's candidates emerge during the later part of filing week which begins this Monday, May 11.

This week Heidi Eisenhower, who is 49, the chief of operations at the Northwest Maritime, declared for the seat. She follows Jefferson County Planning Commissioner Lorna Smith, 69, and Good Man Sanitation Chief Operating Officer Amanda Funaro, 41, who already announced their intention to seek Sullivan's seat. This will force a primary, with the two top vote getters in the August 4 contest advancing to the November 3 general election.

Eisenhower said she's had her eye on the commissioner's seat for some time, working on the campaigns for District 2 commissioners Richard Vote and David Sullivan. She would have run in 2016 if Sullivan had chosen to step down at that time.

Aside from the Maritime Center, Eisenhower has led the Jefferson Land Trust and operated the Fountain Cafe. She told KPTZ that now is the time to follow a long standing passion for public service.

The face of this campaign is undetermined, with activities like doorbelling and candidate forums in jeopardy due to social distancing procedures. Here at KPTZ, we are developing our own coverage strategy, which may need to forgo having all the candidates in the same room. Candidate filing, however, already has a safe, virtual alternative. Candidates can declare online or by mail, or make an appointment with the auditor's office to do so in person.

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This just in from our "it couldn't get any worse" department: Asian Giant Hornets have been spotted in the northwest, with two reported individual sightings in the northern part of Washington State. The aggressive insects, should they establish a local presence, could threaten or even destroy the bee population. They are pretty scary looking and can be two inches long, but generally don't attack humans who do not disturb their nests.

WSU professor Patrick Tobin told KPTZ that the predatory insects are now foraging for food, and could be hard to spot. He said that anyone who sees a giant hornet should first take a deep breath and then report the sighting to the Washington State Department of Agriculture (call 1-800-443-6684). For information about the hornets and the reporting process go to the department's web page (<https://agr.wa.gov/departments/insects-pests-and-weeds/insects/hornets> > REPORT NOW).

The department warns that if it becomes established, this hornet will have negative impacts on the environment, economy, and public health of Washington State. Tobin is optimistic, saying the detection programs are proactive and preventative, and in no way suggest that the Asian giant hornet is permanently established in our region.

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In keeping with the phased reopening of public facilities three local state parks – Fort Worden, Fort Flagler and Fort Townsend – are now accessible to the public for day use. Anderson Lake will remain closed, according to Brian Hageman, who supervises all four local parks.

Hageman told KPTZ that park visitors should practice social distancing and visit in groups no larger than four. Camping is closed, and each park will open one flush toilet and unlock all of the vault toilets on park lands. The park's volunteers, many of whom are in the risk zone, will stay home until July.

Masks are a personal choice. Some people feel the park environment is safe, while others won't want to take any chances.

Hageman called the reopening "a great move," but feels that the expected high temperatures may encourage too many people to take a walk in the park. Some reopening parks have needed to close because too many people show up and shatter social distancing protocols. So people need to be very cautious and act responsibly, Hageman said.

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KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon Monday through Saturday and at 5pm Monday through Thursday. You can contact us through news at [kptz.org](http://kptz.org).

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