

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant, with local news and commentary for Thursday, August 13, 2020.

Jefferson County's COVID-19 case numbers have held at 55, as of Wednesday. According to the latest report, of 5,549 tests administered 5,448 have turned up negative. The ratio of positive tests is still 1%, although the gender ratio has shifted slightly to 55% female to 45% male.

Effective immediately, all Jefferson County licensed food service establishments will face increased inspections to ensure compliance with Governor Jay Inslee's COVID-19 Safe Start Washington Plan and the State Health Director's orders.

In a Public Health Order announced Tuesday, County Health Officer Dr. Thomas Locke said inspections and enforcement will now occur. Depending on the case, business will have 72 hours to fix the problem unless there is an imminent health hazard.

Cited businesses will be compelled to immediately cease operations and must comply with safeguards in order to regain its permit to reopen.

A business could lose its license and face criminal penalties and fines, should they continue their noncompliance. Locke said the Sheriff's office, Port Townsend Police, Washington State Patrol, and others may be called upon to enforce the health order.

Additionally, the names of food establishments with permit suspensions will be posted on the Jefferson County Emergency Management website and the Jefferson County Public Health website and will be a public record.

The order also addresses the use of masks, those who feel they cannot wear masks, and why face shields are not allowed as a substitute.

The order was written because of the growing transmission of COVID-19 locally and in surrounding counties. Locke believes the cause is in part due to people gathering in public places like grocery stores, restaurants, bars, and taverns without wearing masks, social distancing, and taking the required health and sanitation precautions.

The Jefferson County Board of Commissioners voted this week in support of continuing work on the Olympic Discovery Trail, approving a land swap deal between Four Corners Road and Anderson Lake Road. The agreement allows an exchange of 41 acres of County property located in Quilcene for a two-mile right-of-way over Pope Resources property. Pope will reimburse \$36,000 to the county to address the difference in the assessed value of the exchanged properties.

The Quilcene property will return to the tax rolls.

This exchange will facilitate the extension of the Larry Scott Trail about four miles to Anderson Lake. Yet to come, a way to complete the additional five miles to Discovery Bay. Eventually, the trail will link Port Townsend and LaPush.

The Larry Scott Trail has gained popularity as a recreational spot during the pandemic. After a while, those familiar with the trail wish it would extend a little farther.

The All County Picnic in Place event occurs this weekend. In its eighth year, the gathering is intended to motivate East Jefferson County residents to develop resiliency through fostering community and raising awareness about local emergency resources, according to the picnic's web site (<https://12020.org/emergency-preparedness/all-county-picnic/>). It provides people with the chance to connect with local emergency management, first responders, community leaders, and elected officials, eat free corn on the cob with your neighbors and learn about the resources that exist to serve you and your community.

The focus on COVID-19 has pushed back thoughts of earthquakes and tsunamis, but their probability has not changed.

The pandemic has made it impossible to meet at HJ Carroll Park as usual, but the free corn is still on the table. The All County Picnic Team will be picking up fresh, organic corn on the cob from the Chimacum Corner Farmstand and delivering preassembled bags of corn to neighborhoods throughout East Jefferson County on Saturday and Sunday. They plan to distribute one to two ears of corn per person depending on the number of requests.

For a delivery, register at allcountypicnic.com (<https://theproductionalliance.org/events/all-county-picnic>) before midnight tonight.

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon Monday through Saturday and at 5pm PM Monday through Thursday. You can contact us through news@kptz.org.

This is Charlie Bermant. Thank you for listening.