

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant, with local news and commentary for Tuesday, January 26, 2021.

Jefferson County reported four new occurrences of COVID-19 over the weekend, bringing the total number to 283 cases since testing began last spring. The new cases are a woman in her 30s, a man and a woman in their 40s, and a woman in her 50s. One case originated from an out-of-county exposure while the others are under investigation. Thirty two people are now awaiting test results. The latest percentage is reported as 72 cases per 10,000 population.

Vaccination distribution is mostly on pause in Jefferson County due to an uncertain distribution of vaccine from state sources and no clear indication of shipment schedules and when appointment scheduling can resume, according to press release from Jefferson Healthcare.

Even as new appointments are on hold, all confirmed second dose appointments through the Drive-Thru Immunization Clinic are still valid. At this time Jefferson Healthcare has immunized over 2000 individuals 75 years and older over the last week, part of a seven-day vaccination push by the hospital, meant to inoculate the frailest and most vulnerable in the community. The vaccine help line operated by the Department of Emergency Management is no longer brokering appointments due to the vaccine shortage. Instead, callers are asked to log on to <https://jeffersonhealthcare.org/covid-19-vaccine/> for the latest news. We will also keep you posted about vaccine availability here on KPTZ.

People over 65 – the next age group scheduled to receive the vaccine – can log on to the hospital website and follow the patient services menu item to select the COVID-19 option. There they can register to receive an email as to vaccine availability.

Naval Magazine Indian Island is one of four local Naval bases that will participate in an annual anti-terrorism force protection exercise during the first twelve days of February. The action, known as Citadel Shield-Solid Curtain 2021, is designed to minimize the impact on local communities but there may be times when the exercise causes increased traffic around bases or delays in base access due to temporary gate closures or other security-related activities.

Area residents may also see or hear security and other first responder activities associated with the exercise, including potentially seeing training smoke, hearing small explosive sounds, observing increased response vehicle activity, or observing increased vessel activity on the water near an installation. The simulations are part of the training exercise and pose no safety risk. Advanced coordination has taken place with local law enforcement and first responders.

The Navy routinely conducts this type of security and other emergency response exercises to ensure readiness and improve coordination, communication and collaboration with other agencies during emergency situations, according to a press release.

And this just in: Styrofoam recycling will return to Port Townsend. After a short break due to the retirement of Port Townsend's long-time volunteer Styrofoam recycler, a small group of Port Townsend residents is working with Safeway to add its Port Townsend store to the Safeway Styrofoam recycling program. The local group, Port Townsend StyroCyclers, is asking residents to set aside clean and dry Styrofoam materials for delivery to the Safeway parking lot on February 13 from 9am to 1pm. Pieces may be broken down to conserve space. Consider collecting pieces in paper yard bags instead of plastic.

No packaging peanuts will be collected. Contact local mailing vendors to see if they are accepting peanuts when you have them. No water-logged Styrofoam will be accepted. Dispose of it with landfill garbage.

Please spread the word. For more information and to volunteer at Safeway on February 13, send an email to PTStyroCyclers@gmail.com.

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@kptz.org.

This is Charlie Bermant. Thank you for listening.