

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant, with local news and commentary for Thursday, February 11, 2021.

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There were no new COVID-19 cases reported in Jefferson County yesterday, but that's true to a pattern. Each of the last few weeks have reported little or no new cases in the middle of the week, and it picks up over the weekend. There are now 323 cases, up from 307 a week ago. Forty two people are awaiting test results.

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Jefferson County is preparing for the first significant snowstorm of the season, with a winter storm watch in effect until Friday morning. When we say the "first" it could be the "only," if the past few years are any indication. According to its Facebook page, the City of Port Townsend is preparing for snow accumulations. The staff is on alert and the plowing equipment is standing by, ready to go. City crews will plow priority routes until the snow stops accumulating and will apply sand to icy spots.

The city has posted information on its website (<https://cityofpt.us/publicworks/page/transportation> - bottom of page) concerning snow routes, snow removal policy, and winter driving tips. The advice is to stay home if possible and refrain from driving. This shouldn't be too much of a stretch, as we've been living the whole stay-at-home thing for almost a year. Like COVID-19, the weather is a serious hazard that requires our attention. Also like COVID-19, Jefferson County is a lot better off than other parts of the country.

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Also like the rest of the country, Jefferson County there is a shortage of available COVID-19 vaccines. Jefferson Healthcare is now using its limited supply to administer second doses, and is not inoculating any new people until the supply improves.

The hospital has ordered 975 Pfizer first dose/primary shots, 500 Moderna first dose/primary shots, and 200 Moderna second dose/booster shots from the Department of Health, and expects to learn about availability today. If the order is approved, it will arrive Monday, February 11, at which time scheduling will resume. The hospital will then contact those who are qualified to receive the vaccine, opening the clinic seven days a week until all the available vaccine is administered. If the state declines the hospital's request, the process begins again on Monday, with another order. In the meantime, you can sign up on the Jefferson Healthcare website (<https://jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/1466/Case-Information>) to receive a notice as to your own vaccine availability.

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In this time of weird we may embrace the normal, like tax season. Well, maybe not. Even so, property tax reminders go out this week, in anticipation of the April 30 first installment deadline. Those who signed up for eNotices about their tax bill got an email from [help@noticesonline.com](mailto:help@noticesonline.com) yesterday afternoon.

This is the second year the office is using white return envelopes instead of the historical green envelopes. While this ends something of a tradition, the change saves money on envelope printing and allows USPS tracking on payments returned by mail.

The first half of the tax payment is due on April 30, with the remainder on October 30. People can pay it all at once, or pay the remainder any time before the second deadline. But they can't pay any amount that is not on

the bill. And while the office is unable to extend the due date or waive interest or penalty for late payments, it can accept partial payments for property taxes by prior arrangement. Contact the Treasurer's Office (<https://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/329/Treasurer>) for details.

According to the assessor's office, the median home assessed value in 2020 that is used to compute 2021 taxes rose around 8% from 2019. "Median," as we know, represents the average. We won't know the amount of our increase until we get the bill. For instance, changes on a typical home went from a drop in Gardiner of 2% to an increase in Quilcene of over 27%.

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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@kptz.org](mailto:news@kptz.org).

This is Charlie Bermant. Thank you for listening.