

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Lily Haight with local news for March 24, 2021.

No new COVID-19 cases were reported yesterday, so Jefferson County's total number of cases remains at 344. Seven new cases have been reported so far this week, five of which were all members of one family from the West side of the county. There are currently seven cases in active isolation. 66 people await test results. For the most up-to-date information, go to the Jefferson County Public Health website (<https://jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/1466/Case-Information>) or the Jefferson County Facebook page.

Last week, Governor Jay Inslee announced the statewide eviction moratorium will be extended through June 30. The extension of the moratorium allows more time for local aid organizations to plan for what will happen when the moratorium is lifted and landlords will be able to evict tenants who have not paid rent during the pandemic.

The extension also allows for homeless individuals who have been living in tents and campers at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds to continue to stay there for the time being. Groups such as Dove House Advocacy Services, Bayside Housing, and OlyCAP have been providing social services and meals for people at the fairgrounds throughout the pandemic, with help from some funding approved by the Jefferson County Commissioners. When the eviction moratorium is lifted, the Jefferson County Commissioners and the Jefferson County Fair Board will have to decide whether to allow individuals to keep camping there or evict those who are unable to pay the normal camping fees. As of now, nearly all the camping spots at the fairgrounds are occupied. Developing a funding stream for families who may be facing eviction due to income loss from the COVID-19 pandemic is one of the top priorities the Intergovernmental Collaborative Group noted in their COVID-19 Recovery Plan, should the county be eligible for more federal funding this year.

And the Clallam-Jefferson County Pro Bono Lawyers organization is gearing up for assisting those who may not be able to afford their own representation when faced with eviction. Those who may be facing eviction when the moratorium ends can learn more by visiting the Clallam-Jefferson County Pro Bono Lawyers website (<https://cjcpbl.org/>) and watch their hour-long presentation on eviction law, tenants rights and the moratorium.

The Port Townsend Farmers Market is set to reopen on Saturday, April 3. This will be the first market of the season, and while it usually opens with a ribbon cutting ceremony and goat parade, with COVID-19 restrictions on large gatherings, the first market of the year will have less fanfare than usual. However, the same delicious fruits, vegetables, local eggs, meat and more will be available from all your favorite farms in the area.

The market also provides an opportunity for low-income residents to purchase local produce. The Jefferson County Farmers Market Association will be continuing to offer a dollar-for-dollar Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefit match this year. For every \$1 of EBT cash spent, shoppers will receive a matching \$1, up to \$40 per shopper per market day. In 2020, the market provided \$45,669 in SNAP Match to 520 Jefferson County households. The market also accepts Senior Farmers Market and WIC Vouchers.

Using these nutrition assistance program vouchers at farmers markets not only helps those in need of fresh fruits and veggies, but it also helps local farmers struggling to make it through the pandemic. According to the Jefferson County Farmers Market website (<https://jcfmarkets.org/>), the PT and Chumacum Farmers Markets saw a reduction in farm sales by an average of 30% over the course of the season last year due to the pandemic.

But SNAP and SNAP Match farm sales more than doubled at both markets, providing some financial security to farmers who couldn't rely on selling locally grown produce to restaurants because of the pandemic shut down.

As the farmers market starts back up, it's important to remember that even if you've been vaccinated, the pandemic is not over. Jefferson County Farmers Market rules include limiting market attendance to one person per household, wearing a face mask to protect staff and other shoppers, maintaining a minimum of six feet between yourself and other shoppers, purchasing groceries without touching other food, and washing or sanitizing your hands before entering the market. For more information on how to attend the farmers market and stay safe, visit the Jefferson County Farmers Market website (<https://jcfmarkets.org/>).

And that's it for today's local news. 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. I'm Lily Haight. Thanks for listening.