

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant, with with local news and commentary for Tuesday, May 4, 2021.

We can expect Jefferson County to log in 400 cases of COVID-19 in the very near future, if it hasn't already. The county reported seven new cases over the weekend, for a total of 397. We have reported a 1.74 percent positive rating, with 48 people awaiting test results. Eleven active cases are in isolation. The monthly numbers also reflect a sharp increase. Forty five new cases occurred in April, compared to just ten in March.

In his weekly address to the county board of commissioners Health Officer Dr. Tom Locke acknowledged the increase but said there is currently no discussion about rolling back the county into Phase 2. While outdoor mask guidelines are relaxed, Locke warned those not yet vaccinated that it is unsafe to go to large gatherings or indoor dining or sporting events, especially places where you are going to be with a lot of people in an outdoor environment. Jefferson County leads the state in terms of percentage of people who are fully vaccinated over the age of 16, with 55.4%. Those who have received their first dose is 67%, second to San Juan County.

Locke reported the first instance of a so called breakthrough case in Jefferson County, where someone who was two weeks past their second vaccine dose became infected. Still, this is a rarity – the vaccine is 95% effective. He said the most severe cases affect people in their 80s. "This vaccine in particular, and most vaccines in general, are less effective the older we are."

Director of Emergency Management Willie Bence reported that he is working with the Department of Health in order to provide vaccinations to homebound Jefferson County residents through a mobile clinic effort. Eight such vaccinations were administered. The next step is to vaccinate the homeless population. His team is working with Dove House, Bayside, and OlyCAP to identify those groups and begin the effort.

The Port Townsend Film Festival has established a search committee to find a replacement for Janette Force, who announced her retirement after a decade at the helm of the prestigious event. The new executive director will have responsibility for the entire organization, leading staff in achieving organizational goals, working closely with the Board of Directors, and connecting with the broader Port Townsend Film Festival community, according to a press release. The job is open until filled, with the interview process slated to begin on June 15. The desired start date for the position is between September 1 and January 1, 2022. Force will head up this year's festival, which is expected to be mostly virtual but could feature some in person events. The full job description is on the organization's web site, accessible through the "we're hiring" tab (<https://ptfilmfest.com/Get-Involved/We're-Hiring.html>).

While the local housing market continues to shrink, Port Townsend has a lot of job opportunities. Local restaurants are hurting for good help – although we hear that customer rudeness by new residents has taken an unwelcome uptick making these jobs even harder. For those who don't have the stomach or the patience to wait tables, there are several executive positions open in Jefferson County. This includes the top job, county administrator, replacing Philip Morley who resigned abruptly last week. Central Services Director Mark McCauley will serve as interim County Administrator during the search to replace Morley. The Commissioners will begin the process of determining the scope and role of a new County administrator. They will be gaining

input from senior leadership, electeds, jurisdictions and the community, with plans to look at alternate models from other counties.

On Thursday, we reported allegations against the new Port Townsend Police Chief Thomas Olson, who begins work this week, casting aspersions on his previous professional behavior. We apologize for repeating these allegations before properly vetting them. The current national climate surrounding police reform influences our judgment, and this will not happen again.

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.