

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant, with with local news and commentary for Thursday, June 10, 2021.

Jefferson County's COVID-19 cases have slowed but not stopped. Two new cases were announced on Wednesday bringing the total to 424. Seven cases were reported in June, an average of one every 1.4 days. Thirty five people are now awaiting test results.

Most people, you'd like to think, embrace the idea of getting a COVID-19 vaccination and jump right in as soon as their age or occupation group qualifies. But some people need a little push. And Washington State isn't being shy about establishing programs that will motivate us to reach that elusive 70 percent vaccination percentage. On Tuesday, we told you about the vaccination lottery. For five successive Tuesdays, the state will pick almost 250 names out of a hat to receive prizes from cash to Discover Passes. The program is administered by the Washington State Lottery system, using Federal funds allocated for COVID-19 relief.

Another imaginative incentive program is called "Joints for Jabs," where vaccinees get a free pre-roll in conjunction with their vaccination is now in place, but this may not be quite as incentivizing as the lottery. Under the program, Cannabis retailers can stage vaccination events in their stores and can provide one free joint from a licensed producer or processor at the time of the vaccination. Careful records are required, and the recipient must of course be over 21. Cannabis and Liquor Board spokesman Brian Smith told KPTZ that the agency received inquiries from three different retailers who wanted to try the idea in conjunction with their local health districts. The idea was quickly approved, with the Cannabis Board supervising but not administering the program. Participating retailers must line up the licensed vaccine provider and promote the event at their own expense. This can be discouraging, and the Associated Press reports that cannabis' illegal Federal status means that the hurdles to offering the free joints are substantial enough that few of the state's legal pot shops are saying they will participate, even if they would like to do so.

This is true in Jefferson County, as retailers are slow to embrace the idea. Chimacum Cannabis has spent the last year encouraging social distancing and discouraging anything that would attract many people at a time, so a vaccination clinic goes against these parameters. Choice Cannabis in Port Townsend will never say "never," but the idea isn't that attractive due to government regulations and the program's short duration – it expires July 12 – make it even less attractive. If we address the situation logically – which can be hard considering the topic – it seems headed for failure if not inefficacy. The cost of setting up a clinic is a loss leader for retailers, with a dubious benefit. Individual joints are usually priced under \$10, and you know they'll be giving out the cheap stuff. So its value compares with a \$3 Starbucks gift card – worth having, but not always worth a trip across the street. And, another thing. Any state resident receiving at least one vaccine is automatically entered in the library – I mean the lottery. Joints for Jabs is on the spot, then and there. So you can't go into a retailer and show your vaccination card and get a free joint – which is the process with some participating bars that offer vaccines a free beer. It's mind boggling that some people need incentives, aside from making the world a safer place. Those who are so inclined should just get the shot and then buy a pre-roll to celebrate, and to support a local business.

The five white sculptures appearing around town are part of the Art Marker incentive and will be unveiled during concurrent events this Tuesday, June 15. These pieces, sculpted by Jonah Trole, define the town's Creative District, supporting a prosperous year-round creative economy and linking artists with audiences. The Art Marker Project fulfills a goal to identify creative ways to link the historic districts with Fort Worden through marketing, signage, and bike path strategies. The creative economy sector includes visual arts, literary

arts, culinary arts, performing arts, and makers, according to the Creative District web page (<https://ptcreativedistrict.org/>). Each piece supports a separate endeavor: Culinary Arts at Tyler Plaza (the intersection of Tyler Street and Water Street), Performing Arts at the corner of Monroe Street and Washington Street, Literary Arts at the Port Townsend Public Library, Visual Arts, uptown at Lawrence and Tyler, and Makers' Arts at Fort Worden. All of the unveilings begin at 5:15pm. You can hop around but it may be best to settle on a single one and focus your energies – kind of like real life.

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.