

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant, with with local news and commentary for Thursday, June 24, 2021.

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Two-boat ferry service between Port Townsend and Coupeville was postponed once again, and could not even happen this season. This has the most to do with vessel crewing challenges, according to a press statement.

“The agency looked at every option, but was unable to consistently provide current service levels due to a shortage of crews. Adding service would mean additional cancellations. The system is hiring as qualified candidates are located and working with labor partners on these challenges, according to the statement. Despite the relaxation of some requirements expected on June, all traveling customers are still required to wear face coverings inside the terminal, at the tollbooth, and aboard the ferry.”

In a statement that won't help their bottom line, the ferry system urges travelers to consider limiting their travel to only the most essential trips while service continues to be constrained by the pandemic. For additional travel information regarding COVID-19, visit the COVID-19 Travel Updates webpage (<https://wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/rider-information/updates/2020/09/30/covid-19-travel-updates>).

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The Port Townsend School District will conduct an online pilot program for grades one through twelve in the next school year, designed to provide an at-home option for families and students in the COVID-19 pandemic who may not be ready to return to in-person instruction. The district is committed to the program for the 2021-2022 school year, and will subsequently decide whether it should continue. The program is designed to provide public school options for students in grades 1-12. Program plans will be developed by a certificated teacher in collaboration with the student and family and will include courses offered through Edgenuity Courseware. Online Program students will be required to meet weekly either virtually or in-person with their conferencing teacher. Students will participate in state assessments and are required to meet all Washington State requirements prior to graduating and receiving a high school diploma. Interested families will need to complete an application to enroll in the program. Applications are now available for the 2021-22 school year for students entering grades 1-12. Part time enrollment is available for students in grades 6-12, or students in grades 1-5 needing special services at another school. For more information go to the school district website (<https://ptschools.org/>).

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Port Townsend's Summer Festival Season was shut down for the second consecutive year due to COVID 19, disappointing locals who could ride their bikes to enjoy world-class entertainment. The major festivals – Rhody, Film, Thing, and the Centrum Gatherings – all made early cancellation announcements, because you can't plan these events overnight and the health restrictions are unpredictable.

There is now a cautious re-emergence. There could be a Rhody Parade, skipping the surrounding events, later in the summer. Centrum has planned some outdoor events, along with the Film Festival. Now we hear that another local summer tradition, Concerts on the Dock, could be resuscitated. Organizers are hoping to present an abbreviated schedule this summer, dependent on approval from the health department and the city to proceed. June 30, when the mask mandate expires and we are scheduled for the next step in our re-emergence, is when the planning begins in earnest. Look for an announcement in early July. Sponsors are now contacting local performers to check their ability, but the same rule applies: It'll take a while for some bands to get back into shape. You can't just put together a set list overnight, after not playing together for months.

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And the Port Townsend Trash Task Force is taking to the streets this Sunday, June 27, with its regular bimonthly trash pick up event. Recent events haven't attracted as many volunteers as needed, so organizers are hoping that more people will help to clean up the town. The event takes place from 11am to 1pm and will operate out of two locations. The uptown group will meet at the front of the Community Center, while the downtown group assembles in the parking lot next to the Maritime Center. Identifying vests and bags will be supplied. Volunteers should dress for warm weather and bring their own gloves and grabbers, because you don't want to handle this stuff even when there isn't a pandemic.

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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.