

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Carmen Jaramillo with local news for September 21, 2021.

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A missing hiker is returning home to his family this week after having been stranded in the Olympic National Park for over seven days. Jerran Fisher was rescued by a U.S. Coast Guard air crew Sunday after an extensive search effort which started Thursday. The 26-year-old entered the park on September 8 through the Graves Creek trailhead in the Quinault Rainforest. His itinerary had him scheduled to return four days later after camping at Enchanted Valley, Marmot Lake, Camp Pleasant and Lake Sundown.

Family members sounded the alarm to park authorities Thursday when he had been gone for 8 days. After discovering his car still at the Graves Creek Trailhead, search and rescue hiked into the park tracing Fisher's route in reverse. The search continued into the weekend with crews facing inclement weather during the rain and wind storm that hammered the peninsula on Friday. Search and rescue workers found Fisher Sunday in a ravine near Mt. Olson around 4:30pm. Two Coast Guard air crews assisted in the rescue via helicopter as Fisher was unreachable safely by foot. Fisher was said to be in good spirits, mostly uninjured and well prepared for his extended stay in the wilderness. He was transported to an Olympia hospital in stable condition.

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Joshua Atchison, Port Townsend Police Community Services Officer, died of an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound in his Sequim home on September 4. Kelli Holloway, Atchison's wife and partner of 19 years, told *The Leader* that she and her husband were settling down for dinner on a typical Saturday night when the sound of a gunshot rang out from the bedroom. Atchison had told her moments before he was going to lie down. Holloway said there was no note left and no previous indication that her husband had been struggling with his mental health. The Clallam County Sheriff's office is investigating the case.

Atchison had just recently been hired as the Community Services Officer at the Port Townsend Police Department after working there for several years in administration. Atchison served for four years as executive-assistant to former police chiefs Troy Serber and Mike Evans. After being laid off from that position due to COVID-19, Atchison was rehired by current police chief Thomas Olson to replace Wendy Davis as community services officer when she retired in April.

According to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, COVID-19 has killed more police officers in the United States this year than any other cause of death with about 71 deaths so far recorded in 2021. But BLUE H.E.L.P., a national organization committed to suicide prevention in police officers, contests this assertion saying that suicide is the silent killer. According to BLUE H.E.L.P., 99 current and former police officers have taken their lives in 2021. These numbers are hard to track, in part because until last year there was no official agency collecting statistics on suicides among law enforcement officers. The federal Law Enforcement Suicide Data Collection Act was passed in June 2020, tasking the FBI with tracking suicide alongside officer deaths of all other causes.

A Go Fund Me page has been set up by Atchison's step daughter in order to help her family cover funeral costs and basic living expenses for Atchison's widow. Nearly \$7,000 has been raised by donors since the page was created September 8. If you are struggling, you are not alone. Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 24/7 at 1-800-273-8255.

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Public Health Officer Dr. Allison Berry delivered a little bit of good news yesterday to the Board of County Commissioners. Case rates in Jefferson County, while still high, are decreasing, she said, meaning that local efforts to flatten the curve are working. Jefferson County Public Health added 18 new cases of COVID-19 yesterday bringing the total confirmed case count to 932. 61 cases are in active isolation and 115 people are awaiting test results.

Deputy Public Health Officer Dr. Tom Locke weighed in Friday on vaccine mandates for medical workers and requirements for indoor dining. Everyone has a choice, he said, to get or not get the vaccine, but that choice has consequences. For healthcare workers, getting the vaccine is a minimum requirement, he said. Just as healthcare workers don't have a personal choice to not wash their hands before treating patients, they must get the vaccine in order to protect their patients from the virus. They are not being forced to get the vaccine, he said, instead if they choose not to get it they are no longer qualified to work in the medical field. "If your personal choice harms someone else, you are responsible for that harm," Locke said.

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Did you see the harvest moon last night? The yearly harvest moon is the harbinger of Fall, occurring within days of the autumn equinox. While I'm sad to see Summer go, I'm looking forward to the crisp mornings and changing colors of Fall. I've already ordered my Halloween costume.

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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](mailto:news@kptz.org). I'm Carmen Jaramillo. Thanks for listening.