

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Carmen Jaramillo with local news and commentary for November 23, 2021.

Jefferson County Public Works is one step closer to breaking ground on a new segment of the Olympic Discovery Trail after the Board of County Commissioners approved a grant agreement Monday with the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office. The grant awards 3.8 million dollars to the county for the design, permit and construction of three miles of asphalt multi-use trail which will connect the Larry Scott Trail to the Anderson Lake State Park through Rayonier timber land. Total project cost is estimated at 5.3 million dollars, meaning Jefferson County will still need to fund an additional 1.4 million. This three-mile section to Anderson Lake State Park is the first of multiple segments which will eventually connect the Larry Scott Trail to the Milo Curry Trailhead in Discovery Bay. Once complete they will create a 135 mile trail from Port Townsend to La Push. As Olympic Discovery volunteers and advocates will tell you, this project is 30 years in the making with still many more years before it's completion. According to the grant agreement, construction on this small section of trail is not scheduled to begin until March 2024, with completion planned for later that same year in October.

Jefferson County food banks in Brinnon, Quilcene, the Tri-Area and Port Townsend are handing out hundreds of turkeys this week to families in need. The Brinnon Food Bank is open today until 1pm. The Tri-Area Food Bank is open tomorrow from 10am to 1pm at 760 Chimacum Road. The Quilcene Food Bank is open tomorrow from 11am to 2pm at 294952 Highway 101. And the Port Townsend Food Bank is open tomorrow from 10am to 3pm at 1925 Blaine Street. Please consider donating to the Jefferson County Food Bank Association this week to make sure no one's Thanksgiving dinner table is empty. Free-to-go Thanksgiving meals can be picked up from noon to 2pm Thursday at the Tri-Area Community Center at 10 West Valley Road. Call 360-379-4228 to reserve a meal. Brinnon residents can arrange to pick up meals at the Brinnon Community Center by calling 360-796-4350.

Jefferson County has set the date for two more child vaccination clinics which will take place next month. Children ages 5 to 11 can receive their first or second dose of the Pfizer vaccine either Saturday, December 4 at Blue Heron Middle School or on Saturday, December 18 at Chimacum Schools. Kids are eligible for a second dose at least three weeks after their first dose. Make sure to bring your child's vaccination card with you in order for them to receive the second dose. Learn how to schedule an appointment at <https://www.jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/202/Public-Health>. Pediatric doses of the Pfizer vaccine may also be available at local pharmacies on a case-by-case basis.

The Center for Disease Control announced Friday that it is approving vaccine boosters for everyone over the age of 18. Previously only those who were at a higher risk for complications due to COVID-19 were eligible. As long as you are at least six months out from your second dose of either the Pfizer or the Moderna vaccines or 60 days out from the Johnson and Johnson vaccine then you are now eligible. Dr. Allison Berry told the Board of County Commissioners Monday she is recommending the booster for pretty much everyone but she said those who are younger and in good health need not be in any rush to receive a booster.

Commissioner Greg Brotherton asked Berry what she thought about global vaccine equity and whether or not people like him who are relatively healthy should wait awhile before getting a booster. Berry said in her opinion she would prefer if the United States was only giving vaccine boosters to the elderly and at-risk populations and was sending the rest of it's doses abroad so that more people could have access to the life saving vaccine. But, she said, she doesn't set national vaccine policy and they must administer the doses they are given before they expire or become unusable. As of today the United States has given 200 million doses of the vaccine to countries in need and has pledged to give 1.1 billion doses by 2022. Roughly 10% of the US population has received a booster shot according to the New York Times, while less than 10% of people have received a single dose in many African and Pacific nations.

Jefferson County Public Health added 19 new cases of COVID-19 yesterday bringing the total confirmed case count to 1,273. 53 cases are in active isolation, three people are hospitalized locally and one person has died bringing the total deaths locally to 18. Berry said the local death was a man in his 70s who had some underlying health conditions and was vaccinated but had not yet received his third dose which is vital for the elderly. Public Health is also contending with two outbreaks at long term care facilities in Jefferson and Clallam counties Berry said. The Jefferson County outbreak has infected 13 people, including 12 residents and one staff member. The outbreak in Clallam County has infected 42 people. Berry said both outbreaks have been connected to unvaccinated staff members, who received exemptions from the governor's order for healthcare workers.

That's all from me for today. KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon and five PM Monday through Thursday and at noon on Friday and Saturday. You can contact us through news at kptz.org. I'm Carmen Jaramillo. Thanks for listening.