

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Lily Haight with local news for December 29, 2021.

Jefferson County Public Health reported 11 new cases of COVID-19 yesterday. This brings our total case count, since the beginning of the pandemic, up to 1,480. There are currently 83 active cases in isolation and two Jefferson County residents are currently hospitalized. Jefferson County's case rate has increased in the past week – now at 214 per 100,000. As always, you can find the most up to date case information at the Jefferson County Public Health website (<https://www.jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=845>) or the Jefferson County Government Facebook page.

Another two to three inches of snow fell on Monday night and, with temperatures as low as they are, it isn't melting as quickly as Pacific Northwesterners are accustomed to. Jefferson County Road Crews are working round the clock to sand roads for safe driving, starting with primary and secondary roads. If you're wondering when your road will be sanded, a list of the county's snow plow priority routes is available at the county's website, under the Public Works Road Maintenance tab (<https://co.jefferson.wa.us/921/Snow-and-Ice-Control>). Port Townsend crews were out all night plowing additional snowfall. They also have a snow plow priority route map on the city's website (https://cityofpt.us/sites/default/files/fileattachments/public_works/page/6251/snow_plow_routes.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2sS4Wi1KtakXYjKAYWJUL_wNqfU_WiIHZen7fRfpx4c75v4-NloCQN9w).

Temperatures are expected to stay in the 20s and low 30s until this weekend, and more snow is forecasted for Thursday. Low temperatures leave many worried about our fellow community members who do not have access to housing. If you know someone who doesn't have a place to go during the cold weather, call OlyCAP at 360-385-2571. The emergency shelter located in the basement of the American Legion building is open to all right now, and is operating as a warming center, where people can stop in to get warm and have a cup of coffee. There is also the Winter Welcoming Center in the Pope Marine Park building on Water Street, which is open to everyone during the day, from 8:30am to 12:30pm. While New Year's Eve events are taking place, the welcoming center will temporarily be located at the First Presbyterian Church, at 1111 Franklin Street on December 30, 31, and January 1.

Out in the county, the Brinnon Community Center is open from 9am to 1pm Monday through Friday as a warming center. The Jefferson County Library is open Monday through Thursdays from 10am to 7pm, Fridays and Saturdays from 10am to 5pm and Sunday from 1pm to 5pm, and is a good place to stay warm while reading a book.

Last weekend, some residents in the Port Townsend area lost power for a short period of time. If you lose power and your home gets cold, first call your utility provider, such as the Jefferson County PUD at 360-385-5800, and then seek assistance from a neighbor or friend, or a warming center in town in order to stay warm.

The Production Alliance will be hosting First Night, an all-ages New Year's Eve extravaganza celebrating the New Year from 3 to 9pm on Friday. The event includes five downtown venues, both indoor and outdoor, featuring live music and performances, interactive art experiences, presentations, lantern making and parade, free Toshikoshi Soba noodle soup, and more. Festivities will conclude with a spectacular Fireworks Show and the traditional Anchor Drop at 9pm to ring in the new year. The best view of the Anchor Drop will be at Pope Marine Park.

Then, on New Year's Day, Washington State Parks and the Friends of Fort Worden will be hosting five memorable hikes as part of the statewide First Day Hikes program. Visitors will have a choice of four guided hikes about 1.5 miles long, or one 2.5-mile self-guided hike. The hikes will begin at 11, 11:15 and 11:45 at the USO Building parking lot next to Taps at the Guardhouse near the park's main entrance.

Jan. 1 also marks the first free day of 2022. Visitors won't need a Discover Pass to park at Fort Worden and other state recreation lands. You can see a map of the first day hikes at the Friends of Fort Worden website, <https://www.fwfriends.org/trailmaps>.

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. I'm Lily Haight. Thanks for listening.