

Hello world, you are listening to KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Carmen Jaramillo with local news and commentary for December 28, 2021.

Snow snow snow! Jefferson County was graced with a white Christmas this past weekend when a few inches of snow began falling on Christmas eve and continued intermittently into Sunday evening. A mild cold snap will continue through Thursday, when more snow could be expected. Today temperatures are forecasted as partly sunny with a high of 30 degrees and a low of 23 degrees. Temperatures are expected to return to the high 30s and late 40s with rain next week, so build your snowmen while you can.

Jefferson County PUD was busy all weekend restoring power to more than 1,000 homes across the county in Port Townsend, Chimacum, Coyle and on Marrowstone Island. Crews worked through the night Sunday and by Monday morning were still working to restore power to 60 homes. Jefferson County and The City of Port Townsend urged residents to stay home Sunday except for essential travel as a melted layer of slush began to freeze in the frigid temperatures. Stay safe out there today as poor road conditions continue. Drive slow and leave lots of stopping room. When going up hills, accelerate slowly.

Officer Nathan Holmes, a fifteen-year veteran with the Port Townsend Police Department, retired last week according to an internal city memo. Holmes' last day on the force was Monday December 20. His final "call out" over the radio occurred at 8pm. A retirement party is scheduled tentatively for next month at the American Legion. Why Holmes has chosen now to retire is unclear. City officials were not immediately available for comment due to the holiday. Having his retirement party at the Legion might be a little ironic. Guess he needs to revisit his old stomping grounds near the homeless shelter one last time.

Holmes is not the only long-time city employee who is retiring this month. Three members of Port Townsend's City Council attended their last business meeting on December 20, including Mayor Michelle Sandoval. Sandoval has served on the city council for 21 years and served three terms as Mayor. She is departing alongside councilors Pamela Adams and Ariel Speser.

In her final newsletter to the city, Sandoval reflected on the large and small changes the city has endured over her twenty years of service and how each one was in it's own time controversial. She said she believes the future holds only more drastic and exponential change for our community. She urged residents to take the coming change in stride and to see growth and development not as a subtraction of our values but as an addition. She said she will continue to stay involved and engaged with the city and with the community. At Sandoval's last meeting, new city councilors Aislinn Diamanti, Ben Thomas, and Libby Wennstrom were sworn into office. The new city council will hold its first business meeting January 3, 2022 at 6:30pm. At that time a new mayor will be elected. My money is on current Deputy Mayor David Faber.

Christmas tree collection by DM Disposal begins today. Port Townsend residents with trash service can place Christmas trees out for recycling on their regular yard waste days. The trees must be cut into sections no longer than four feet and should be smaller than four inches in diameter. Trees that meet these criteria will be picked up for no extra charge between now and January 15.

No COVID-18 update this week from the Board of County Commissioners meeting due to the holiday, but we can still give updated case numbers from the weekend. Jefferson County Public Health added 40 new cases of COVID-19 yesterday, one of the largest single-day increases locally in the entirety of the pandemic. This large increase could be due in part to a lag in reporting over the holiday weekend. This brings our total confirmed case count to 1,469. 82 cases are in active isolation and two people are hospitalized. Such a large increase in cases and isolations could be the result of a local outbreak but we will have to wait and hear from public health officer Dr. Allison Berry next week. Our two-week rolling case average per 100,000 residents have climbed back up to 214.

Jefferson County has set the date for two public vaccination clinics in the month of January. Children and adults can sign up to receive shots either Saturday January 8 at Chimacum Schools or on Saturday January 15 at Quilcene High School. Both clinics will reserve spaces between 10am and 12pm specifically for children ages 5 to 11 to receive the Pfizer vaccine. The afternoon appointments will be for Moderna first, second or third doses. The Quilcene clinic has appointments available until 2pm and the Chimacum clinic until 4pm. Sign up beforehand to reserve your space at jeffersoncountypublichealth.org. I received my booster dose of Moderna at one of these county clinics last week. I was in and out within 30 minutes but, boy, was I hurting the next couple of days! Plan accordingly, people.

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@kptz.org. I'm Carmen Jaramillo. Thanks for listening.