

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Lily Haight with local news for January 12, 2022.

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Jefferson County Public Health reported 19 new cases of COVID-19 yesterday. This brings our total case count, since the beginning of the pandemic, up to 1,844. There are currently 250 active cases in isolation and six Jefferson County residents are hospitalized. Jefferson Healthcare reported one new death yesterday, bringing the total number of deaths in Jefferson County since the beginning of the pandemic up to 21. The death reported yesterday was a man in his 80s who had chronic health conditions and was unvaccinated.

Since my Wednesday news report last week, we have had a steep increase of 236 new cases in Jefferson County. Our case rate has doubled – now at 795 per 100,000. Forty of Jefferson County's new cases are from the Olympic Corrections Center in Forks, according to Dr. Allison Berry, Jefferson and Clallam County's public health officer. It's not the only state prison dealing with an outbreak – according to the Department of Corrections, 15 prisons across the state are currently in "outbreak" status. 440 incarcerated individuals are currently infected with COVID-19 across the state, according to DOC's January 10th report.

While Department of Corrections staff are required to be vaccinated by Governor Jay Inslee's vaccination mandate, our local jail guards are not required to be vaccinated. Right now, there are 21 individuals incarcerated in the Jefferson County jail – most have not been convicted, and are awaiting trial, unable to post bail. Jefferson County District Court Judge Mindy Walker announced last week an order that will postpone district court trials until February, due to the rapid spread of Omicron.

Now is a good time to get your COVID-9 booster shot if you have not already. This Saturday, there will be a vaccination clinic at the Quilcene High School. From 10 to noon, Pfizer shots for kids ages 5 to 17 will be available, and from 12:30 to 2:30, Moderna shots for adults will be available. You can get your first, second, or booster shot at the afternoon clinic. Appointments are required. Call 360-344-9791 to sign up.

As always, you can find the most up to date COVID-19 information at the Jefferson County Public Health website (<https://www.jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/202/Public-Health>), or on Facebook(<https://www.facebook.com/jeffcowagov/>), on the Jefferson County Government page (<https://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/1429/COVID-19>).

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County commissioners declared a state of emergency in Jefferson County, due to the recent adverse weather affecting multiple parts of the county. Public works director Monte Reinders said the storm last week caused significant damage to the Coyle Peninsula, areas south of Mt. Walker, and the Dosewallips. Wind and heavy snow brought down trees and power lines, making roads impassable for several days. Some roads still have only one-lane access, and county road crews worked round the clock last week to plow roads in those areas. In addition to county effort, the Mason County and Jefferson County PUDs assisted with getting power back to homes in those southern parts of the county. According to Kristen Masteller from Mason County PUD, assisting Jefferson County during the storm used about 30% of their yearly budget within the first week of 2022. Jefferson County PUD General Manager Kevin Streett said the recent outage cost the PUD roughly a half million dollars to fix. Some residents went without power for nearly a week. The county commissioners voted to call a state of emergency in order to open up avenues for both state and federal reimbursements for the funds spent tackling the roads in the bad weather.

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The city council held their first workshop meeting on Monday night, where they discussed plans for the upcoming year. One year after sunseting their ad-hoc committee on law enforcement and public safety – which was created after mass protests by city residents to “defund the police” in the summer of 2020 – the city’s 2022 work plan includes creating a Race and Social Justice Advisory Board. This item was tasked to the city attorney and clerk’s office. But in addition to creating that board, the city also plans to focus on expanding police officer recruitment, and a reorganization of the police department. In addition, this year, the city will be finalizing a new union contract for the police by November of 2022. We’ll be following along with the city’s plans for police expansion here at KPTZ news. Stay tuned to stay informed.

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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 Lily Haight. Thanks for listening.