

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Lily Haight with local news for January 26, 2022.

Jefferson County Public Health reported 49 new cases of COVID-19 yesterday. This brings our total case count, since the beginning of the pandemic, up to 2,420. There are currently 217 active cases in isolation and three Jefferson County residents are hospitalized. At Monday's county commissioner briefing, Jefferson County Public Health Officer Dr. Allison Berry said COVID-19 cases in Western Washington and Jefferson County are reaching their peak – meaning that we could see cases start to decrease relatively soon. Dr. Berry said we still do not know if the cases we're seeing in Jefferson County are the Omicron variant, because test results are conducted locally and not shared with the state Department of Health, however Dr. Berry has said in the past month that she believes they are likely Omicron cases. While we might be reaching our peak, Dr. Berry advised people not to let their guards down, as it is still risky to be out in public right now, and still very easy to get infected. On top of that, hospitalization and death rates often trail behind spikes in cases, so we could still see significant strain on our local hospital system in the coming weeks. Dr. Berry also gave advice on what to do if you're sick, but you can't get tested for COVID-19, due to the shortage of tests. The most important thing to do, she said, is to stay home while you're sick for five days from when your symptoms start. If you are exposed to someone who has COVID19, and you can't get a test, stay home for five days if you haven't received a booster shot yet. If you are boosted, Dr. Berry said you can continue to work. If you manage to get a hold of a test kit, and test positive for COVID19, stay home for 10 days from when the symptoms started.

Director of Emergency Management Willie Bence announced the next mass vaccination clinics for children and adults will take place this Saturday, January 29, at Blue Heron Middle School in Port Townsend. From 10am to noon, Pfizer shots for children ages 5 to 17 will be available. Then from 1pm to 4pm Moderna shots for ages 18 and up will be available. You can get your first, second, or booster dose of the vaccine. To sign up for the clinic, you must have an appointment. Call 360-344-9791. And, as always, you can find the latest case information, and vaccine clinic information at the Jefferson County Public Health website (<https://www.jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/202/Public-Health>), or on the Jefferson County Government Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/jeffcowagov/>).

And now for a sure sign that spring is on the way – The Jefferson County Farmers Market is accepting vendor applications for the Port Townsend and Chimacum Markets. To apply for a booth at the PT Farmers Market, you must send in an application by February 1. For a booth at the Chimacum Market, applications are due on April 1. Applications are welcomed from Jefferson County farmers, artists, and artisan food makers. If you're wondering whether or not your business would qualify to be part of the farmers market, you can review the vendor guidelines at the Jefferson County Farmers Market website (<https://jcfmarkets.org/apply>), where you will find the application form as well.

This year, the Jefferson County Farmers Market will also be providing small grants to businesses owned by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. This fund, called the BIPOC Start-Up Business Fund, aims to help BIPOC-owned farmers market businesses with acquiring the materials and permits needed to participate in the market. The fund provides between \$500 and \$1,500 to help BIPOC-owned businesses start a successful market season. To learn more about this fund, or to apply, visit the Jefferson County Farmers Market website <https://jcfmarkets.org/proactive-equity-inclusion>).

The Tri-Area Community Food bank has put out a call for new volunteers. The foodbank is currently down nine volunteers this winter, and is searching for replacement volunteers to keep the food bank running smoothly on

Tuesdays and Wednesdays to make boxes of food for distribution. To volunteer, go to the Tri-Area food bank at 760 Chimacum Road on Tuesday or Wednesday, and talk to Sue or John, then fill out their volunteer application. You can learn more at the Tri-Area Food Bank's website at <https://jeffersoncountyfoodbanks.org/>.

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.