

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Tim Quackenbush with local news for February 3, 2022.

Jefferson County Public Health reported 17 new COVID-19 cases yesterday. This brings our total case count, since the beginning of the pandemic, up to 2,660. There are currently 207 active cases in isolation, and four Jefferson County residents are hospitalized. For the latest information and info on how to get your vaccine, visit the Jefferson County Public Health website (<https://www.jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/1429/COVID-19>).

According to Jefferson Transit, the Kingston Express route, postponed last September due to COVID-19 and transit staffing shortages, will now begin operation on February 22 of this year. Implementation of this route on a pilot basis will provide a new bus route from Port Townsend to Kingston and back with one round trip in the morning and one in the evening. Stops will include the Haines St. Park and Ride, Four Corners Park and Ride, and a new stop at the Gateway Visitor's Center where Route 19 ends at 104. This route will begin as a pilot project, lasting until June of 2022, at which time it will be assessed for permanent implementation. The first month of operation will be fare-free for all riders. The cost of this new route is estimated to be over \$247,000 per year, and if permanently approved, Jefferson Transit will apply for grants to offset the cost of operation.

Native American tribes have reached a settlement of \$590,000,000 with drugmaker Johnson & Johnson, and three large drug distribution companies. All federally-recognized tribes will participate in the settlement. W. Ron Allen, Chairman of the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe on the Olympic Peninsula, was quoted by NBC News, calling it a "Big deal for those tribes to reach their own settlement, in contrast with the tobacco industry deals in the 1990s that left out Native American groups." Allen also stated that he doesn't expect his tribe to get much from the settlement, but that it will help in its efforts to build a healing center that will address opioid addiction. The Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe's healing center is currently under construction in Sequim.

Also in the works at the Tribe's Jamestown campus is an expansion of the tribal library to include a permanent exhibit on the history of the Jamestown S'Klallam. The expansion will enlarge the space from 1600 to 4000 square feet, and includes an oral history interview and research conference room, a small theater area, and a walk-through exhibit space. When finished, the exhibit will tell the history of the tribe and will continue through the present day work of Tribal Government and business. Construction is expected to take 10 to 12 months.

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 Tim Quackenbush. Thanks for listening.