

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Jim Burke, with local news and commentary for Tuesday, August 9, 2022.

The Jefferson County YMCA Mountain View Pool is closed the rest of this week. They sent out a letter to users of the pool. Here is a statement from it: "We apologize for any inconvenience. Not only have we been struggling with a shortage of staff but we have also been working to navigate the stress of receiving countless harassing and disturbing phone calls, voicemails, and emails – most of which have been from outside of the community."

Last Wednesday, KPTZ's Casey Dolan reported on a woman protesting her removal from the YMCA Mountain View Pool, and a counter-demonstration in support of a trans staff member and the YMCA policy. The protest started when one of our local residents was ejected from the pool after an incident in the locker room involving her and a trans staff member. The local resident is now being used as an example in some national, and now, some international press accounts, of someone whose traditional values and rights are being denied. Regardless, the YMCA fully supports trans rights and their non-discrimination policy follows the laws of Washington State.

The rest of the letter to pool users said, "In the midst of this really challenging time, the overwhelming response in support of our Y and in support of being an inclusive, welcoming place for all has given us hope. We are so grateful! We plan on seeing you next week!"

Yesterday was the Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners Meeting and Dr. Allison Berry, Public Health Officer for Jefferson and Clallam Counties and Willie Bence, Director of Emergency Management spoke to the commissioners.

In Jefferson County, the two-week COVID-19 case rate is 547 per hundred thousand. One person is currently hospitalized – a patient who was unvaccinated and is presently on a ventilator. 94 new cases were added this week for a total of 5,365 cases. 30 people have died due to COVID-19 in Jefferson County since the pandemic began (<https://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/1429/COVID-19>).

In Clallam County the two-week case rate is 509 per hundred thousand. There have been 14,866 cases since the start of the pandemic. Two people are currently hospitalized. The death toll from COVID-19 stands at 119 deaths in Clallam County since the pandemic began (<https://www.clallam.net/Coronavirus/>).

Home tests: <https://www.sayyescovidhometest.org>

Willie Bence reminded everyone of the upcoming All County Picnic. The 10th annual All County Picnic (ACP) invites East Jefferson County to strengthen neighborhood networks as part of a community-wide celebration of resilience and emergency preparedness.

This past Saturday, there was an open house at the PT Community Center for the Sims Gateway Project to show the public plans that are the result of work by the Stakeholder Committee, the Port Of Port Townsend, Jefferson County PUD, and the City of Port Townsend.

Last Thursday on *Brewocracy Now*, co-hosts Missy Nielsen and City Manager John Mauro were joined by Eron Berg of the Port of Port Townsend, Will O'Donnell of the Jefferson County PUD, and Steve King of the City of Port Townsend Public Works. Eron Berg explained how the Sims Gateway project got started.

Last summer, he looked up at the Poplars on the boat yard side – the south side of Sims way – and noticed that as the trees and power lines blew in the breeze, that the power lines were arcing into the poplars. In fact, he said, upon closer examination there was a band of scorched branches on the entire row of the trees. When Jefferson PUD came to investigate, the power line through that area was shut down and re-routed, and it is still shut down. In addition, there are safety limits for the cranes used at the boatyard so they need to have 20 feet of clearance from the power lines and the trees. Up to now they have been operating with a smaller safety margin.

The gateway project would move the power lines underground, expand the boatyard to the edge of the boatyard property, and allow a greater number of boats, jobs, and a better working safety margin. In order to allow for all that to happen, unfortunately the Lombardy poplars would need to come down on the south side of Sims Way. The poplars on the north – or Kah Tai – lagoon side are not faring well because of the water there and the presence of metals in the soil, particularly copper. I spoke to Steve King of Port Townsend Public Works at the open house, and this is some of what he said:

Jim: “So what is the preferred option in this room?”

Steve: “The preferred option in this room is for full boatyard expansion which means replacement of the poplars on the boatyard side. On the Kah Tai side, it’s replacement over time – we preserve the poplars that are in good health and replace the ones that are failing.”

Jim: “Well, that seems simple enough, but there are a lot moving parts.”

For more information see <https://cityofpt.us/engagept/page/sims-gateway-and-boatyard-expansion-project>.

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon and five Monday through Thursday and at noon on Friday and Saturday. You can contact us through news@kptz.org. This is Jim Burke. Thanks for listening.