

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Jim Burke, with a special, extended local news and commentary for Tuesday, August 23, 2022.

Last Friday, KPTZ Reporter Ann Katzenbach shared a story about the Event Under the Tent. She told our listeners about the brainstorming that went on led by the Intergovernmental Collaborative Group with input from attendees. One of the suggestions – and something that has been mentioned in discussions around this subject – is Auxillary Dwelling Units, or ADUs: Converted garages or separate small structures on local lots that can house additional family members, or tenants.

The next meeting of the Event Under the Tent will be all About ADUs, so if you are wondering how you can create a small separate living space, you can attend the next event and learn about the requirements for ADUs, permitting processes and other helpful information, and possibly be part of the solution to the current housing crisis in Port Townsend and vicinity. That event under the tent is Thursday, September 29, and you can learn more at <https://housingsolutionsnetwork.org/>.

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. Dr. Berry said COVID-19 is downtrending in the United States, down 19% nationally, and even deaths from COVID-19 are declining, but that approximately 460 Americans are still dying each day due to COVID-19. In Washington State, the decline is more dramatic with cases down 30%.

In Jefferson County, the two-week COVID-19 case-rate is 463 per hundred thousand, a number similar to last week. One person is currently hospitalized. Two patients have been released. 86 new cases were added this week for a total of 5,521 cases. No deaths this week, so 30 people have died due to COVID-19 in Jefferson County since the pandemic began.

In Clallam County the two-week COVID-19 case-rate is 395 per hundred thousand, which is down from last week, for a total of 15,283 cases since the pandemic began. 2 people are hospitalized at this time, and Dr. Berry said unfortunately two people died in Clallam County this past week, bringing the total to 121 deaths due to COVID-19.

She said the numbers overall are still high, but continues to recommend vaccinations, masks in indoor public spaces, and good ventilation in indoor settings. There is an omicron-specific booster that is on the way and will arrive earlier than expected – in September. There is no specific date, but the rollout will be similar to the other vaccine rollouts, starting with patients over 65, and eventually including everyone as young as 18.

There was mention of a question from a KPTZ listener about a change at the CDC website with information about the mRNA vaccines. Dr. Berry explained that when a patient is injected with the mRNA vaccine that the immune system goes to work replicating the spike protein that appears to the immune system as the virus and that between mere hours and 2 to 3 days at most, the entire vaccine is excreted from the body. The spiky protein that the immune system created lingers in the body for several more weeks, and then it too leaves the body, but the immune system remembers that it has seen that spiky protein before, so when it appears again, in the form of the real virus, the immune system mounts a robust defense, much faster than an immune system that has not been introduced to the spiky protein before, as in an unvaccinated person.

Willie Bence said The All-County Picnic this weekend was a more modest affair than in years past. There was an issue with the procurers of corn on the cob, because the growing season has been less than ideal, so in some cases, zucchini was substituted. There was some disappointment expressed, but Willie reminded everyone that with resilience as the theme, it was good that people could learn to be flexible in the face of disappointment, as everyone might need to be in the face of a real county-wide emergency.

Willie Bence said there were 20 neighborhood picnics on Sunday, for people to gather, get to know their neighbors and organize emergency prep. I'll stick my neck out here and say some folks probably made some zucchini boats or a nice ratatouille.

You can listen to Dr. Allison Berry's answers to questions, and Willie Bence's full remarks on our website, KPTZ.org. The transcript of this newscast has links for both County's websites:

<https://www.clallam.net/Coronavirus/>

<https://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/1429/COVID-19>

<https://www.sayyescovidhometest.org> – where to order free quick tests each month

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