

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM. I'm Jim Burke, with local news and commentary for Port Townsend and vicinity on Tuesday, September 13, 2022.

This past weekend was, at long last, the return of the Wooden Boat Festival (WBF) to Port Townsend. As I roamed the grounds of the festival, I was really impressed by the level of organization, and the dedication of staff and volunteers who made it all happen. I was curious about the numbers, so I spoke with the WBF volunteer coordinator, Angela Hewitson and the Director of the festival, Barb Trailer:

“My name is Angela Hewitson”

“And you are...”

“I am the public engagement manager of the Northwest Maritime Center and volunteer coordinator of the Wooden Boat Festival. I think right now we are a little under 530 volunteers.” “How many months or weeks does it take to get all those volunteers involved and up to speed?”

“I do start a lot of our recruitment in the Spring – in March and April to really get a sense of who would like to be involved in our leadership. We have almost 50 volunteer captains that dedicate up to 500 hours every year just to be a part of this to make it happen. And then I have over 1,200 volunteer shifts. I go live onto our website starting mid-July. The week of the festival we start on the Tuesday before and it's a 7-day, full-day, full-week operation from setup to tear down. The days of the festival – Friday, Saturday, Sunday – is when we are fully operational, but all the setup is started as early as Tuesday. And our breakdown will – knock on wood – finish by the end of [the next] Tuesday.

“...by the end of Tuesday. Because they're going to take apart the jetty starting Wednesday, right?”

“Correct. Sunday is when the teardown starts, but then every single thing has to disappear, including every cigarette butt you find on the ground. And it's like magic; it's like we were never here.”

“Fantastic. Thanks for talking with me.”

“What's your name”

“I'm Barb Trailer.”

“And you are the...”

“...festival director.”

“How many people would you say are here this week?”

“About 9,000.”

“9,000 people came to see us here in Port Townsend? How many vendors?”

“About 60.”

“And how many boats?”

“225.”

“How much time will it take to finish taking all this down?”

“It will be done by tomorrow night.”

“Amazing! Thanks a lot.”

“You're welcome.”

The Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners meeting was yesterday, and both Dr. Allison Berry and Willie Bence spoke during the Public Health Briefing.

In Jefferson County, the two-week COVID-19 case-rate is 324 per hundred thousand. No one is currently hospitalized. Only 51 new cases were added this week for a total of 5,699 cases. Jefferson County's total count of COVID-19-related deaths is still 31.

In Clallam County, the two-week COVID-19 case-rate is 241 per hundred thousand, just 39 new cases this week for a total of 15,449 cases since the pandemic began. 1 person is hospitalized at this time. 124 people have died in Clallam County from COVID-19 since the pandemic began. Two more deaths were reported over the weekend. One woman, who was 90 with underlying health issues, vaccinated, but with a single boosted, and one man in his 80s, who also had comorbidities, and just one booster of the vaccine.

There are now omicron-specific booster shots available and Dr. Berry is recommending anyone over the age of 65 should get one.

Last evening, there was a joint meeting of Port Townsend City Council, the Port Commission, and the PUD Commission to hear a presentation of the full scope of the process of the preferred option for the Sims Gateway and Port Boatyard expansion project. After discussion, and comment from both the public and the officials present, the officials of all three agencies voted approve a draft memorandum of understanding, unanimously. This is now the MOU – the Memorandum of Understanding.

The preferred alternative developed by the Stakeholder Committee and recommended by the City's Parks Recreation Trees and Trails Advisory Board (PRTTAB) incorporates the following key features:

- Expansion of the Port Townsend Boatyard to the Port's north property line;
- Removal of the poplar trees on the south side of Sims Way adjacent to the boat yard;
- Placing the 115 KV electrical transmission power lines underground;
- Replacing the existing substandard power supply to the boat yard;
- Replanting the right-of-way adjacent to the boat yard with appropriate street street trees and shrubs;
- Over time, thinning and replacing the poplars on the north side of Sims Way (i.e., the south side of Kah Tai Nature Park).

Separate and distinct from the project scope described in the MOU, but also included in the MOU, the parties understand and acknowledge the PUD's need to undertake near-term steps to ensure safe and reliable electrical power to the community that may involve the trimming or removal of selected poplar trees consistent with its statutory and regulatory authority. This means some trees will be trimmed and/or removed this Fall before the storm season begins.

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