

This is Jim Burke, substituting for Simon Jaynes, with local news and commentary for Friday, November 4, 2022 on KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington.

It is November 4, 4 days until Election Day. In Jefferson County, as of this morning 27,415 ballots have been returned to the County Auditor, just over 49% of the ballots out there. Of those ballots, 198 have been challenged. In Clallam County 21,342 ballots have been returned, just over 37%. 308 ballots have been challenged in Clallam County. When you return your ballot, there is a space by the signature for your phone number, optional, but would allow ballot processors to contact you if need be. You can check the status of your ballot on the county elections webpages:

Jefferson County: <https://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/1266/Elections>

Clallam County: <https://www.clallamcountywa.gov/162/Elections-Voter-Registration>

Ballot return statistics: <https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/research/ballot-return-statistics.aspx>

This Sunday, November 6, 2022, marks the end of daylight savings time. The Washington State Fire Marshal's Office encourages you to check your smoke alarm when turning back your clocks. Working smoke alarms are a key part of a home fire escape plan, and they save lives by cutting the risk of dying in a home fire by half.

- Smoke alarms should be installed in every bedroom, in hallways outside bedrooms, and on every floor of the home, including basements.
- Smoke alarms with non-replaceable 10-year batteries are designed to remain effective for up to 10 years from the manufacture date. If the alarms chirps, warning that the battery is low, replace the entire smoke alarm right away. Also, replace the smoke alarm if the manufacture date is more than 10 years old.
- Press the test button to ensure your smoke alarm is working properly.
- Rental housing must also have working smoke alarms. Contact your landlord or property manager if your rental home does not have smoke alarms installed. Maintenance and testing of smoke alarms, however, is the responsibility of the tenant.
- Contact your local fire agency for additional assistance. Many local fire agencies have smoke alarm programs that may provide free devices and installation. For more information, contact the State Fire Marshal's Office at 360-596-3929.

This last item came in from Trooper Rick Johnson, Washington State Patrol Public Information Officer yesterday afternoon. He said that in King County (which is off our beat, but please bear with me) overnight and into the morning, the Washington State Patrol (WSP) responded to two fatality collisions and one serious injury collision that left a young woman fighting for her life.

- Collision #1 on I-5 just after 1am on November 3: A suspected impaired driver drove off of the 130th overpass through a construction area and struck two vehicles. A passenger in one of the vehicles was critically injured.
- Collision #2 on northbound State Route 167 at State Route 18: A suspected impaired driver struck a semi and went over the barrier onto the collector distributor, and the driver was unfortunately ejected and was deceased at the scene.
- Collision #3 on I-405 just south of State Route 520: This was a one-vehicle fatality collision where the cause is still under investigation.

The first two collisions were human choices and the third is still under investigation. Washington State Patrol Captain Ron Mead, commander of WSP field operations in King County states, “Overnight and into this morning were the 54th and 55th deaths in addition to a young woman fighting for her life resulting from traffic collisions on local freeways and state highways. These are 55 families forever changed as they grieve the loss of a mother or father, brother or sister, a child or grandchild. That is, simply put, 55 deaths too many. These tragedies have to stop, but the only way they can is by drivers making better choices: Choosing not to drive impaired. Choosing not to speed. Choosing not to drive distracted.”

Captain Ron Mead continued, “We all expect when we get behind the wheel to safely make it to our destination, and one sure way of doing that first and foremost is to focus on the task at hand: driving. The second is to make the decision to not drive impaired, to put the phone down, and to adhere to both the speed limit and the appropriate reduced speed necessary because of conditions. Driver behavior causes the vast majority of these completely preventable tragedies.”

He continued to say “It’s my hope that drivers adhere to making good decisions in choosing to drive in the first place and while driving. And by doing so, we can avoid these needless tragedies that are impacting so many families as we enter the holiday season.” I agree.

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news Monday through Friday at noon and 5pm and at noon on Saturday. You can contact us at news@kptz.org. This is Jim Burke. Thank you for listening.