

This is Casey Dolan with your local news for Tuesday, January 11, 2023 on KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington.

The *Peninsula Daily News* reports that Jefferson County is expecting to have more than \$2 million of federal relief dollars to spend in the next year. On Monday, the Board of Jefferson County Commissioners decided to allocate \$1.5 million of the remaining \$2.4 million American Rescue Plan Act funds toward the Port Hadlock sewer project with the remaining funds to be made available to organizations that request them. The total estimated cost for the Port Hadlock sewer project was \$33,550,000, and through a series of state and federal grants matched with local funds, the county has amassed more than \$30 million for the project. The county has a grant request for \$5 million with the state Department of Ecology, but that money is not yet secured. Construction could start as early as June once a bid has been approved.

Governor Jay Inslee delivered a hopeful 2023 State of the State speech yesterday at the first in-person joint legislative session of the State House and Senate since 2020. He praised the youth and diversity of the new state legislature and spoke on recently passed legislature affecting the housing crisis, behavioral health, climate change, and salmon recovery. Additional student-centered investments such as special education and policies related to public safety and to protect reproductive freedom were also raised.

It is right that he is hopeful. In a recent study, WalletHub.com ranked Washington as #1 in the country as the Best State to Find a Job and #1 in Economy. Oxfam ranked Washington as #3 for Best State to Work In and US News & World Report ranked Washington as the Best State in America for two years running. He ended by saying, "We have a special state. We have a special moment. Let us realize both. Let's get to work."

An unidentified Washington contractor and a trucking company have teamed with the conservative non-profit group Citizen Action Defense Fund (CADF) to challenge the constitutionality of key legislation in the 2022 State Transportation Package. The attorney general, Bob Ferguson, has been notified that a bill central to the package, SB 5974, violated the "single subject requirement" of the state constitution. In a press release issued by CADF, the organization says that the bill was 122 pages long and that many of its various provisions were unrelated to its title or each other. CADF pursues aggressive litigation in cases where, according to their website, they "have an opportunity to advance free markets, restrain government overreach or defend constitutional rights.... Litigation is our primary tactic and we advocate for all manner of conservative and constitutional causes."

A press release from U.S. Representative Derek Kilmer's office has announced that President Biden signed into law Kilmer's legislation, the Planning for Aging Veterans Act, as part of a government funding package passed by the House and Senate in December. Among other imperatives, the Planning for Aging Veterans Act will require the Veterans Administration to develop a strategy addressing the current and future long-term care needs of veterans to identify areas for future investment; clarify the VA policy to ensure catastrophically disabled veterans residing in a State home receive their medications without a copayment; and require that any deficiencies during State veterans' home inspections are reported to the VA and inspection reports are published on the VA website.

January is Radon Action Month. Students across the Northwest are being encouraged to participate in the 2023 Northwest Radon Poster Contest as an effort to raise awareness about the dangers of radon gas. According to the Washington Department of Health, “Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that can build up in homes both old and new. Testing is the only way to know if your home has radon because it is colorless, odorless, and tasteless. Long-term radon exposure is the number one cause of lung cancer in nonsmokers and the second-leading cause of lung cancer in smokers.” The contest deadline is March 10 at 11:59pm. Winners will be announced by April 17. Contest requirements and information can be found on the Northwest Radon Poster Contest website (<https://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/northwest-radon-poster-contest>).

KPTZ 91.9 FM broadcasts your local news Monday through Friday at noon and 5pm and at noon on Saturday. You can contact us at news@kptz.org. I’m Casey Dolan and I thank you for listening.