

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM. I'm Jim Burke, with local news and commentary for Tuesday, March 14, 2023.

The PT *Leader* reports that the search for a missing pilot and plane near Queets who went missing March 6 is expected to continue this week. Search-and-rescue responders were called in early last week after state officials were notified that a 2006 Cessna T182 Turbo Skylane abruptly dropped off radar as it flew over rugged forest land near Queets last Monday. The missing pilot was identified as Rod Collen of Tacoma. Search efforts began the night of March 6 and expanded to air searches on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday when the weather allowed, officials said. Law enforcement and others have been patrolling roadways in the last known position area of the aircraft as well. Officials reported that the weather on Sunday prevented search-and-rescue efforts from the air from continuing. Personnel were said to be evaluating air search efforts again yesterday.

According to the Washington State Department of Transportation, Collen left the Tacoma Narrows Airport at 5:35pm Monday, March 6. The plane's Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast system was either turned off or malfunctioned a few minutes into the flight, officials said, and the plane was no longer visible on normal tracking systems used by air traffic controllers. With the help of a specialized radar forensics team, primary radar returns were located that placed the aircraft near the coast between Lake Quinault and Queets. Officials said the final radar plots show the aircraft made a very rapid descent to the ground. Collen was the only one on the plane.

While no signal has been detected from the plane's Emergency Locator Transmitter since it went off radar, search officials have narrowed the search area to a 36-square-mile section of forestland. Snow on the ground has impacted attempts to find the plane. Jefferson County Sheriff's Office deputies and Quinault Natural Resource crews have patrolled roads near the areas but the section of terrain is too large and rugged to send in a ground search crew until the search can be narrowed to a more specific area. The plane is thought to have gone down on Quinault Tribal land near Queets near the Jefferson and Grays Harbor county line. The search has been assisted by Coast Guard crews out of Port Angeles and the state is also coordinating the effort with the Quinault Tribe, Jefferson and Pierce County sheriff's offices, the Tacoma Police Department, and the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center. Anyone who thinks they saw or heard the plane last Monday, March 6 or spotted anything in the area is urged to call the State Emergency Operations Center at 800-258-5990 with details. Again, the number for the State Emergency Operations Center is 800-258-5990.

On the COVID-19 front, Jefferson County Public Health reports that 39 new cases were added this past week, so there have been 7,048 cases of COVID-19 since the pandemic began. The two-week COVID-19 case rate is 246 per 100,000 people, still in the high category. Jefferson County Public Health staff estimate that 1 in 9 COVID-19 cases in Jefferson County were reported to public health last week. No one is currently hospitalized with COVID-19 in Jefferson County. Unfortunately, there was another death this week. The individual was in their 60s with underlying conditions and not up to date on COVID-19 immunizations, bringing the total number of those who have died to 36 due to COVID in Jefferson County. At this high transmission rate it is strongly recommended that we all wear a high quality, well-fitting mask in public indoor settings.

SCAM CALL ALERT! Jefferson PUD reports that customers are getting calls from scammers claiming to be PUD staff and threatening to shut off power if not immediately paid over the phone. This is not the PUD! Do not pay them or give out any personal information.

PLEASE NOTE:

Jefferson County PUD Employees will:

- Never call, email, or make a home visit demanding an immediate payment.
- Never call, email, or make a home visit requesting credit card, banking, or financial information.
- Never request payment on a prepaid card.
- Never shut off service without providing written notice at least 7 days in advance.

If you suspect you are being scammed, hang up, use your caller log or caller ID to grab their number and call PUD directly at 360-385-5800 and/or the Jefferson County's Sheriff Office to report it. PUD urges customers to be skeptical. Remember: When in doubt, hang up and call JeffCo PUD to verify any information. You are in control of the conversation by calling them.

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.