

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend. I'm Jim Burke, with local news and commentary for Tuesday, April 25, 2023.

The Washington State Department of Health website reports the two-week COVID-19 case rate in Jefferson County is approximately 99 cases per 100,000. No one is currently hospitalized. There have been a total of 5,048 reported cases in Jefferson County since the pandemic began. The levels of COVID-19 virus present in Port Townsend wastewater is currently 4 billion copies of the SARS-CoV-2 gene per person, per day. That data indicates an upward trend in the presence of COVID-19 in our community. No new COVID-19 deaths were reported. The all-time number of deaths reported on the State website is 36.

In neighboring Clallam County the two-week COVID-19 case rate is approximately 89 cases per 100,000 people. There have been a total of 15,991 reported cases in Clallam County since the pandemic began. The total number of those who have died due to Covid stands at 217 in Clallam County.

Whether you live in Jefferson or Clallam County, you are encouraged to report a positive home test to:

<https://doh.wa.gov/emergencies/covid-19/testing-covid-19/tested-positive-covid-19> or

<https://safercovid.org/mytest/index.html?lang=en>

or simply report your positive result to Washington's COVID-19 hotline at 1-800-525-0127.

Next Monday, Dr. Allison Berry and Willie Bence, Director of Emergency Management for Jefferson County will speak to the Board of County Commissioners about COVID-19 and other issues pertaining to public health. Listeners can submit questions for them by emailing contactus@kptz.org by this Friday, April 28 at Noon.

Last Friday, April 21, U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) joined a group of 14 senators in introducing a resolution designating April 2023 as "Preserving and Protecting Local News Month." The resolution recognizes local news as a public good that serves an essential function in the democracy of the United States. In a press release issued by the Senator's office Cantwell is quoted as saying, "Local journalism unites our communities. It is essential for the safety of our communities and for the health of our democracy. So we must recognize the importance of local journalism – and the people who work hard every day to ensure that Americans are well informed."

According to Pew Research Center, the overall employment in newspaper, television, radio, and digital newsrooms in the United States fell by 26 percent, or 30,000 jobs, from 2008 to 2020. More than 100 local newsrooms were forced to close during the COVID-19 pandemic. The resolution affirms the significance of local news in increasing civic engagement and strengthening democratic norms and practices. The resolution has also been endorsed by PEN America (Poets, Essayists, Novelists of America); the Native American Journalists Association (NAJA); National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ); Theatre Communications Group; National Newspaper Association (NNA); and the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), among others.

Sen. Cantwell has long championed legislation to support local journalism. In 2021, she introduced the Local Journalism Sustainability Act, which would help financially support local news organizations through tax credits to incentivize hiring more journalists, subscriptions, and advertising from local small businesses. She plans to introduce similar legislation again in this Congress. On April 20, Washington state's Legislature passed a similar measure with strong bipartisan support. In 2020, Sen. Cantwell released an extensive report examining the transformation of local news in the information age and impacts to local journalism. The full text of the

resolution is available here: <https://www.cantwell.senate.gov/news/press-releases/april-to-be-designated-preserving-and-protecting-local-news-month-under-resolution-co-sponsored-by-cantwell->.

The Golf Course/Mountain View Commons Open House #2 is tomorrow afternoon, April 26 from 5 to 7pm at Fort Worden Commons. Childcare is being provided by the YMCA at Fort Worden for anyone who needs it. Watching the stakeholders meeting last week offered a preview of what everyone will get to see and comment on tomorrow. Groundswell, the architecture firm that has been working on design alternatives and community engagement, will present some alternatives, including but not limited to:

1. The golf course, pretty much as is, with some improvements,
2. Alternatives of a hybrid golf course/with hiking trails or other uses.
3. Hiking trails, bike trails, exclusively,
4. Central Park, and
5. Return to nature – expansion and cultivation of the Kah Tai Prairie.

All alternatives will require money for redesign and operations, with the Golf Course being the only one that might actually generate some self-sustaining revenue down the line. It was also said that converting to Par 3 Golf would cost money to implement, and would only generate 25% of the revenue of a regular course. Groundswell is not working on a Par 3 course as one of the alternatives.

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!