

At 91.9 FM KPTZ Port Townsend, I'm Diane Urbani de la Paz with local news and commentary for Friday, May 5.

The Axios news service reports that Washington state is set to get more licensed cannabis businesses – and, under a new law, they'll be run by people who were likely to have been most affected by previous drug enforcement. This week, Gov. Jay Inslee signed a bill into law to allow 52 more retail cannabis shops to open in our state between next year and 2032. That's almost a 10% increase over the current number of licensed pot shops, which has been capped at 556 statewide. The measure will also add a hundred new licenses for businesses that grow cannabis.

The purpose of all this is to help people who have been underrepresented in the state's legal cannabis industry to gain a foothold. The new licenses will only be available to businesses that are majority-owned by people who meet certain criteria. These include living for at least five years in an area where high poverty and high unemployment have prevailed, or having been previously arrested or convicted of a cannabis offense. Those metrics are aimed at awarding the licenses to people whose communities were especially affected by decades of criminalizing drug use, according to the law's text. State Senator Rebecca Saldaña, a Democrat from Seattle, said the new law should help diversify the state's pot industry, which is disproportionately white.

And the Jefferson County Farmers Markets team is up to some new things. One is putting out a call for youthful market vendors. Entrepreneurs, including artisans and farmers, age 14 and younger, are now invited to apply to sell their goods at the Port Townsend and Chimacum farmers markets on designated days this summer. Details and the application form can be found on the Jefferson County Farmers Market website, <https://jcfmarkets.org/apply-jcfm>.

The market is also partnering with the nonprofit organization Disability Awareness Starts Here! (or DASH). This crew is all about improving access to public places and programs in Jefferson County and educating the community about why and how good access makes sense for all of us. This Saturday, May 6, DASH volunteers will do an assessment of the Port Townsend Farmers Market layout, signage, and parking. Then the farmers market crew and the City of Port Townsend will use the assessment to improve the Market's design. They will also plan upgrades to Tyler Street, scheduled for summer 2024. If you notice a group of folks wandering slowly through the market, possibly with measuring tape this Saturday, those are DASH volunteers.

The Jefferson County Farmers Market, by the way, is also working on a community survey to be conducted this spring. So we will have a chance to share feedback to help shape the future of our markets.

One more thing about the Port Townsend farmers market this Saturday. The local trio Mojito will play Cuban, Cajun, and Cumbia music for us. Artis the Spoonman will make a special appearance, joining Mojito's Vickie Townsend, Michael Townsend, and Miguelito Fieldhouse. You can check out the ensemble's Latin sound during the market, which is open this Saturday from 9am to 2pm on Tyler Street, uptown.

In other arts community news, the exhibition titled Showcase in Bloom is open now at the Jeanette Best Gallery in downtown Port Townsend. This is a celebration of 24 local artists, who have taken a step forward. The Showcase Artists have filled the rear space of the gallery since the beginning of this year. Now, more than 60 new works from these artists are filling the gallery's front room as well. So you have an art space with nearly

150 creations in it. The Jeanette Best Gallery is on Water Street at Quincy Street in Port Townsend. It's open from noon until 5 o'clock Thursdays through Mondays. And this weekend, the monthly Art Walk will keep downtown's art galleries open until 8 o'clock Saturday night.

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 Diane Urbani de la Paz. Thanks for listening.