

This is Casey Dolan with your local news and commentary for Wednesday, August 30, 2023 on KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington.

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It may have been raining lately, but that hasn't diminished the danger of fire on the North Olympic Peninsula, which East Jefferson Fire Rescue Chief Bret Black says will remain high at least through the end of October. Speaking to the County Commissioners on Monday, Black said, "We want to maintain that vigilance. Nothing's going to restore that dead fuel," referring to the branches and dried brush that fuel wildfires. The burn ban currently in place in Jefferson County will likely continue through the end of October. Black said residents should take precautions to secure their homes from wildfire danger and be prepared to evacuate at a moment's notice if their area is threatened by fire. Homeowners can pre-emptively protect their homes from wildfire by cutting back vegetation around their home, hardscaping areas immediately around the house, and cleaning gutters. KPTZ reporter Jim Burke recently interviewed Chief Black about the continuing wildfire danger and you can hear that interview this coming Monday, September 4 on *Attention Please!* at 12 noon and 5 pm.

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Last Thursday, KPTZ's Derek Firenze reported that the Olympic Peninsula Narcotics Enforcement Team (OPNET) had been defunded and that fentanyl overdoses in the region had increased. But a press release from Senator Maria Cantwell's office last Friday offers a glimmer of hope statewide. \$23 million in Department of Health & Human Services grants will help build resources in communities around the State of Washington to combat rising drug overdoses, improve mental health treatment, and support other important public health initiatives. Cantwell said, "As I travel the state listening to Washingtonians on the front lines of the fentanyl crisis, one thing has been loud and clear – our communities need more resources to tackle substance abuse and drug overdose. I am heartened to see that Tribes, academic institutions, and state and local governments are all working to solve these issues that have devastated communities and torn families apart."

Fentanyl kills more Washingtonians than either car accidents or firearms. Data released earlier this year by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that the State of Washington experienced the single highest increase among U.S. states in reported drug overdose deaths from between March 2022 and March 2023, an increase of 25.39%.

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And, speaking of drugs, the Clallam County Sheriff's Office reports that a Forks man, John P. Robinson III, 35, has been charged with Endangerment with a Controlled Substance in a case involving an 18-month-old child. Robinson was charged last Wednesday in Clallam County Superior Court with a special allegation for domestic violence. He was arrested Thursday after the child was found in a bedroom filled with what turned out to be methamphetamine smoke. The charge is a Class B felony, punishable by up to 10 years in prison and/or a \$20,000 fine. Robinson remains in the Clallam County Jail in lieu of \$100,000 bail. No court date has been set. According to the motion for determination of probable cause filed Wednesday, the level of methamphetamine detected in the child's hair was more than 100 times the test threshold of 100 picograms per milligram and showed the child's hair contained 695 picograms per milligram of amphetamine.

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Be prepared for more road closures after Labor Day weekend. At 6am on Tuesday, September 5, contractor crews working for the Washington State Department of Transportation will close State Route 19 from Egg and I Road to Larson Lake Road for 10 days to remove and replace a culvert blocking fish passage at Swansonville

Creek. The roadway will open at 6am on Friday, September 15. Traffic will detour around the closure using Center Road and State Route 104. A temporary signal will be placed on SR 104 at Center Road and the highway speed limit will be reduced from 60 mph to 30 mph between mileposts 4.08 and 4.62. Access to local roads will be maintained for local traffic on SR 19, but no one will be able to pass through the work zone.

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In the past week, there have been postings on social media of a cougar spotted near Egg & I Road after a confirmed goat kill and possibly the same cougar spotted near Chimacum Creek near Kala Point.

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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](mailto:news@kptz.org). I'm Casey Dolan and I thank you for listening.