

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend. I'm Jim Burke, with your local news and commentary for Friday the 13th of October, 2023.

If you are headed south and east in Washington State this weekend, there is a place you might want to go if you are an amateur astronomer, or you are curious about the subject: The Goldendale Observatory, perched on the Columbia Plateau in the town of Goldendale, will celebrate its 50th year of operations this weekend. Washington State Parks, which acquired the observatory in 1980, will host an event at 2pm tomorrow, Saturday, October 14 to mark the occasion. The family-friendly event, which is free and open to community members and astronomy fans, will feature light refreshments, speakers, educational programming, live views of the sun streamed from the solar telescope to big screens, and replays of Saturday morning's annular eclipse.

A Discover Pass is required to park at the observatory, but the park will have shuttles to and from Goldendale High School between 1:30 and 4:30pm for the event. Plus, if you have a disability parking placard issued by Washington State you will not need a Discovery pass to park at the park. (I asked a local Park Ranger who assured me of this.)

The Goldendale Observatory houses one of the largest publicly accessible telescopes in the nation. In the 1960s, four amateur astronomers associated with Clark College built the facility's current 24-inch Cassegrain telescope. A chance stopover in Goldendale on a scouting trip for a home for the telescope led the four telescope builders to meet with the town's mayor. Thus, they made the decision to site their telescope in Goldendale. Bank loans, a federal grant, and donations funded construction, and the building opened October 13, 1973.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the park's long-time Interpretive Specialist, Troy Carpenter became an early adopter of virtual programming. The park live streamed programs on YouTube and Facebook, using technology adapted for the telescope, and thus bringing the wonders of astronomy to laptops and living rooms worldwide. Back in-person for some time now, regular programming by appointment is interspersed with public events to observe eclipses, comets, auroras and more. Further information:

Goldendale Observatory State Park Heritage Site (<https://www.goldendaleobservatory.com/>)
1602 Observatory Drive
Goldendale, WA 98620

Shuttles will run to the Observatory from Goldendale High School, 525 E. Simcoe Drive during the anniversary event. Please call State Parks' East Columbia Gorge area office at (509) 773-3141 for more information.

Did you feel it?

Local residents of East Jefferson County report that they felt a little jolt at around 7:21pm Sunday night, October 8. Jefferson County Department of Emergency Management issued a NIXLE alert about ten minutes later. It said, simply, "A magnitude 4.5 earthquake, approximately 3 KM SW of Marrowstone (Island) – NO tsunami danger expected." They added, "For more information, you can head to the USGS website (<https://earthquake.usgs.gov/earthquakes/eventpage/uw61965081/executive>). All Jefferson county residents are encouraged to fill out the "Did You Feel It?" survey on that webpage to help us better understand the impacts of the event."

I know, I reported on this on Tuesday, but earthquakes can be like that. Sometimes, when there is a big one, there can be aftershocks for days. This serves as a good reminder that we live in an area with high earthquake

risk. Visit JeffCo's Department of Emergency Management website (<https://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/1067/Preparedness-Planning>) for more information on how to prepare.

And a reminder that the great SHAKE OUT! – a STATEWIDE earthquake preparedness drill – will occur this next Thursday, October 19 at 10:19am – 10/19 at 10:19. To help the Department Of Emergency Management with that event or anytime as a volunteer, you can go to the Jefferson County Department Of Emergency Management website (<https://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/950/Dept-of-Emergency-Management>). And next time, when there's an earthquake, ask yourself: "Did I feel an earthquake?" If you think you did, DO NOT call 911. Go to <https://www.usgs.gov/> instead. Your curiosity might block an urgent call that could save someone else's life. Go to usgs.gov instead.

This afternoon at 12:30pm is *County Connections* with my County Commissioner co-host, Greg Brotherton and a guest Phil Cecere. The Jefferson County Fire Marshall and Building Official will join us to talk about a hearing that is still open about the adoption of the new building codes, the new fire inspection program, and other amendments to our code. Phil will talk about the International Building Code and how it meshes with local code, and the delays and litigation that have been pushing back the implementation of the new 2021 code. Greg and I might ask questions about building code, fire inspections, and perhaps short-term rentals. Listeners can email questions to DJ@kptz.org between now and 12:45. If you are hearing this at 5pm, you can listen to the show by going to KPTZ.org and clicking on the podcasts tab.

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news Monday through Friday at noon and 5pm and at noon on Saturday. You can contact us at news@kptz.org. This is Jim Burke. Thanks for listening.