

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend. I'm Diane Walker with local news and commentary for Friday, March 8, 2024.

Those of you affected by the Facebook outage this past Tuesday were not alone; during the roughly three hours the various Meta apps were inaccessible, millions of users were affected worldwide. For those Americans concerned by the fact that the outage coincided with Super Tuesday, CBS News reports that a senior official with the US Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency has advised that the agency was "not aware of any specific election nexus nor any specific malicious cyberactivity nexus to the outage." Facebook has officially apologized to those users affected.

According to the Jefferson County Sheriff's office, sometime in the last two days, someone decided to steal the 400-pound iron ship's bell that hangs at the entrance to Camp Parsons in Brinnon. Anyone having information about the iconic missing bell should contact Deputy Drew Radford at the Sheriff's office.

A police pursuit initiative has been overwhelmingly passed in Olympia this week. The initiative restores the authority of police officers to engage in a pursuit when there is reasonable suspicion a person has violated the law. The new law amends the controversial restrictions passed by the legislature in 2021 that increased the threshold for evidence required for a police pursuit. Those restrictions were almost universally condemned by our state's law enforcement agencies, who blamed the changes for an increase in crimes, especially car thefts.

In related news, the Clallam County Sheriff's Office reports that their new automatic license plate reader has proven helpful in helping to recover stolen vehicles. On March 4, a Clallam County Sheriff's Deputy was on patrol in the City of Port Angeles. As the Deputy was driving down the 900 block of West 14th Street, the license plate reader alerted him to a possible stolen vehicle parked on the Street. The Deputy stopped to investigate and found the vehicle had been reported stolen February 23rd. Other Deputies and PAPD officers responded to assist and interview the neighbors in the surrounding area. During this process, the other deputies located a stolen motorcycle in the alley to the north of the stolen Honda. The Clallam County Sheriff's Office is continuing to investigate.

Port Townsend residents who drive past the Fairgrounds on their way into or out of town may want to allow a few extra minutes for traffic blockages during daylight hours. Jefferson County PUD electrical crews are replacing 15 poles from the Fairgrounds down 49th Street and upgrading the system for improved load balancing during peak demand. A second section extending to Cook Avenue is planned for summer. The upgrade, from a single line to 3-phase power distribution, will provide better reliability and reduce outages, but it's also expensive: the 49th Street and Cook Avenue line extension is expected to cost an estimated \$100 thousand.

The *Washington State Standard* reports that before closing up shop yesterday, the Washington State Legislature passed a supplemental transportation budget. The \$14.6 billion dollar plan prioritizes public safety, preservation, and maintenance of existing infrastructure. One key focus of the supplemental budget is

investment in the ferry system. An additional \$196 million – all money from the Climate Commitment Act – goes directly toward efforts to build new hybrid electric ferries and projects related to strengthening Washington’s existing fleet. Sadly, according to Ian Sterling, the Washington State Ferries’ director of communications, the chances of adding a new boat to the Coupeville-Port Townsend route in the next four years are “almost zero.”

According to Jefferson County Public Health, today is your last chance to get four free Covid tests in the mail. To order your free tests, visit <https://www.covid.gov/tools-and-resources/resources/tests>.

And just a reminder: Daylight Saving Time will begin this Sunday, March 10, so be sure to set your clocks forward.

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. I’m Diane Walker. Thanks for listening.