

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend. This is Jim Burke, with local news and commentary for Tuesday, June 27, 2024.

Bad news for workers at the paper mill in Port Angeles from the *Peninsula Daily News*: Nearly 200 workers at the McKinley Paper Mill in Port Angeles will lose their jobs August 25, according to an email sent to employees this week. In the email, McKinley Paper Company Operations Director Issac Rosas is quoted as saying, “indefinite mass layoff affecting approximately 193 employees” will begin August 25. The letter served as an official notice under the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act, which requires most employers with more than 100 employees to provide 60 days notice of pending layoffs or closures.

The letter said, “We expect that August 24, 2024, which is the end of the 60-day WARN notice period, will be the last day of work for the majority of the affected employees before the indefinite layoff. Based on the information available to us at this time, we hope that the facility will resume operations at some point in the future, but we cannot say when.” The letter was sent to employees Tuesday afternoon. According to the letter, employees released from employment before August 24 will receive their full pay and benefits for the full 60-day period. Employees who are assigned work but choose to leave the company will not be entitled to pay or benefits beyond their final day of work.

McKinley will have limited jobs beyond August 25 in order to maintain the facility in a safe manner, the letter said. Some of the workers affected by the layoffs include members of the Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers union based in Vancouver (WA). Representatives from the union did not immediately respond to requests for comment. There will be no transfers or bumping rights, but employees can apply for positions at other McKinley locations, the email said.

Dallas-based McKinley Paper Company is owned by Bio Pappel, headquartered in Mexico City, Mexico, the largest manufacturer of paper and paper products in Mexico and Latin America. In June of 2023, the Port Angeles mill’s general manager, Fletcher Austin, said the facility was struggling to maintain its workforce. At that time, Fletcher said the number of employees at the mill was 174, down from 200 in September 2022.

In the *Washington State Standard*: Eight transportation projects around Washington will receive a combined \$89.7 million in federal grants, Democratic members of the state’s congressional delegation said this week. The largest grant, \$25 million awarded to King County Parks, will go toward closing a gap in a planned 42-mile bicycle and pedestrian trail – known as the Eastrail – between Renton and Snohomish County. Grants in the \$17 million to \$18 million range will go to a street project in Vancouver, constructing a transit maintenance facility to accommodate electric transit buses in Kitsap County, and helping the Port of Bellingham reconnect its docks to a nearby rail line. Read more here:

[https://click.everyaction.com/k/87632919/481763558/1208964257?nvep=ew0KICAiVGVuYW50VXJpIjogIm5ncHZhbjovL3Zhbi9TTIdTUi9TTIdTUi8xLzEwNDc4MiIsDQogICJEaXN0cmliidXRpb25VbmlxdWVJZCI6ICI0OWQ5N2Q0Zi1jYzMzLWVmMTEtODZkMi02MDQ1YmRkOWUwOTYiLA0KICAiRW1haWxBZGRyZXNzIjogImppbUBrcHR6Lm9yZyINCn0%3D&hmac=o_YRFmY114g2j6TpDXH2BMFKy_v6gItfmWNj_w4fco4=&emci=ff44d4d5-7e33-ef11-86d2-6045bdd9e096&ceid=553235](https://click.everyaction.com/k/87632919/481763558/1208964257?nvep=ew0KICAiVGVuYW50VXJpIjogIm5ncHZhbjovL3Zhbi9TTIdTUi9TTIdTUi8xLzEwNDc4MiIsDQogICJEaXN0cmliidXRpb25VbmlxdWVJZCI6ICI0OWQ5N2Q0Zi1jYzMzLWVmMTEtODZkMi02MDQ1YmRkOWUwOTYiLA0KICAiRW1haWxBZGRyZXNzIjogImppbUBrcHR6Lm9yZyINCn0%3D&hmac=o_YRFmY114g2j6TpDXH2BMFKy_v6gItfmWNj_w4fco4=&emci=ff44d4d5-7e33-ef11-86d2-6045bdd9e096&emdi=49d97d4f-cc33-ef11-86d2-6045bdd9e096&ceid=553235)

Washington State Ferries issued this alert for the Port Townsend / Coupeville route: Today, they will temporarily close holding lanes 8 and 9 and one ticket booth at the Coupeville terminal. This closure is necessary while they use a crane to move the new ticket agent office to its final location. In addition, on this route, as we are in the peak summer season, reservations are full until 9:10pm tonight.

In other transportation news: The intersection of State Route 19 (Beaver Valley Road) and State Route 104 is partially reopened the morning of June 27, today. The 21-day complete closure of the intersection of State Route 19 and State Route 104 has come to an end. At 6am this morning, the intersection reopened to right turns only. This means if you are coming from the Hood Canal Bridge and wish to turn north towards Chimacum and Port Townsend you can now do that.

After several weeks, left turns will resume at that intersection. Until that time, travelers will detour onto Center Road. The closure allowed contractor crews to make significant progress on a new single-lane roundabout. The new roundabout is anticipated to fully open later this summer.

While travelers will see a lot of roadwork around the Olympic Peninsula this summer, WSDOT has tools to help everyone get where they are going. Travelers can sign up for email updates for projects (<https://wsdot.wa.gov/construction-planning/search-projects>) in Jefferson and Clallam counties. For the most up-to-date information, check the WSDOT app and statewide travel map (<https://wsdot.com/Travel/Real-time/Map/>).

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. I'm Jim Burke and I thank you for listening.