

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend. This is Jim Burke with local news and commentary for Thursday, July 25, 2024.

As you all know, the Crowdstrike update crippled Microsoft-based systems around the world last Friday. Most courts, hospitals, and airlines have recovered, but a system that Delta Airlines uses to match flight crews to flights remained broken well into this week. This is from the *New York Times*: Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg said on Tuesday that his department had opened an investigation into Delta Air Lines after the tech outage last week disrupted flights worldwide, and the agency wanted to hear from travelers who said that the airline had not complied with passenger protection requirements. Mr. Buttigieg said in a statement, that the aim of the investigation is to “ensure the airline is following the law and taking care of its passengers during continued widespread disruptions,” and added “All airline passengers have the right to be treated fairly.” The Transportation Department has consumer protection requirements that cover lost luggage, lengthy tarmac delays, compensation for being bumped from an overbooked flight and other protections.

Passengers should try to resolve their travel issues directly with Delta, he said, but the department wanted to hear from those who thought the airline “has not complied” with the protection requirements during the recent travel disruptions. His announcement included a link to a form for passengers to provide information about their concerns (<https://secure.dot.gov/air-travel-complaint>).

In other airline news that might be of interest to local listeners, Southwest Airlines has ended its open seating policy and is now offering assigned seats, as the airline found that to be the biggest complaint from passengers and they have seen sagging sales of late, as reported by CBS news this morning.

This story is from Charlie Berman at the *Jefferson County Beacon*: Joe Biden withdrew from the presidential race on Sunday, two hours before the scheduled Jefferson County Democrats’ fundraiser. The announcement changed the tone of the event, with many attendees stating that Biden’s exit from the race lifted a weight off their shoulders, as they had expected Donald Trump would defeat Biden in the November 5 general election. After the announcement, attendees of the fundraiser predicted a “Blue Wave” where Democrats could win the presidency along with the House of Representatives and the Senate, so that stepping aside was the responsible thing to do. About 175 people attended the event, which was at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds, the same location hosting a debate watch on June 27. Three weeks after the subpar debate performance against Republican Nominee Donald Trump, Biden weathered criticism about his age and ability to govern. He also received repeated calls from party leaders to withdraw. While some in the room had ambivalence about the Biden candidacy prior to the announcement, they immediately recognized him as one of the most effective modern presidents. He received a standing ovation for his accomplishments, although a gap between political signs indicated that several for Biden were removed prior to the event.

Bob Ferguson, the expected Democratic Gubernatorial nominee, was the headline speaker even though other commitments caused his early exit from the event. He had endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris earlier in the day, based on personal knowledge rather than political expediency. Harris and Ferguson both served as attorneys general for their respective states for four years, prior to Harris’ election to the US Senate. Ferguson told the *Beacon* he got to know Harris fairly well during that time, calling her tenacious, smart, focused, and a strong advocate for the people. She can be tough, he said, but she is also a warm and gracious person.

Along with Ferguson, attendees included Democratic candidates for Congress, candidates for treasurer and superintendent of public instruction and State Legislature, state treasurer, and Jefferson County Commissioner.

Port Townsend resident Jim Whittaker, the first American to summit Mt. Everest in 1963, is a long-time supporter of the Democratic Party. He lauded Biden's decision. Whittaker, 95, is 14 years older than the 81-year-old Biden, telling the *Beacon* that "we all get old and begin to lose our power."

Primary ballots should already be in your mailbox. Those who have not received their ballots should contact the Jefferson County Auditor or go to co.jefferson.wa.us.

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. Thanks for listening.