

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker with your local news and commentary for Friday, August 23, 2024.

Traffic on State Route 19 was stalled for several hours this past Wednesday following a personal injury collision just south of the Oak Bay Road Turnoff. A Dodge Ram traveling at a high rate of speed in the northbound lane at milepost 1 was totaled when it was unable to slow down for the traffic ahead. The vehicle left the roadway to the right, struck a stone wall, rolled over, and landed in a ditch. The driver was uninjured but the passenger was airlifted to Harborview. Both were wearing seatbelts. Charges are pending, but no drugs or alcohol were involved.

As of yesterday noon, the Brinnon Fire Department reports that the Temporary Flight Restriction remains in place over the 2620 road fire, whose 403 acres are still only 8% contained. Though progress is being made and wetter weather is anticipated, Duckabush Road and Mt. Jupiter Road remain closed except for their local residents.

And, speaking of fire, the State Fire Marshal's Office encourages everyone residing in Washington State to ensure their dwelling has a working smoke alarm. Every second counts in an emergency and working smoke alarms can significantly improve the chances of surviving a fire. In fact, in 2023 Washington State fire agencies reported that fire fatalities in dwellings without working smoke alarms accounted for 71% of the total residential fire fatalities. According to the National Fire Protection Association, the likelihood of surviving a home fire doubles in a home with working smoke alarms. For more information, contact the State Fire Marshal's office at 360-596-3904.

According to the Washington State Ferry (WSF) system, the departure of retired ferries Elwha and Klahowya out of Puget Sound has been postponed following a malfunction of tow equipment used by the prospective buyer. The vessels have returned to Eagle Harbor Maintenance Facility on Bainbridge Island and there is no revised tow plan at this time. Purchased for \$100,000 each by Nelson Armas of Ecuador, the ferries were to have been towed to Ecuador for recycling at a clean, green steel mill facility. Both boats are certified to be free of hazardous materials.

WSF Assistant Secretary Steve Nevey, said, "After safely serving our customers for more than five decades each, the sale of these two retired ferries will free up our docking space so we can focus vessel maintenance needs on our current fleet. In addition, any time we needed to move these decommissioned boats to allow for vessel or terminal maintenance, there was a cost for a tugboat, and we needed a tow captain on board, taking away a crewmember from one of our own routes."

The 144-car Elwha mainly served the Anacortes/Friday Harbor/Sidney, British Columbia route before being retired on April 8, 2020. Built in 1958, the 87-car Evergreen State-class Klahowya mainly served the Fauntleroy/Vashon/Southworth route. It moved to the San Juan Islands interisland run in 2014 and was decommissioned on July 21, 2017.

The Jefferson County Public Health Department reports there's been a recent rise in COVID-19 cases. They continue to offer free test kits and they encourage residents to mask in crowded indoor spaces. An updated COVID-19 booster has been approved and will be available this Fall.

And finally, tomorrow marks the return of the Port Townsend Artist Studio Tour, this year featuring over 60 artists. This is the first studio tour since 2019, and it's both free and self-guided. So if you're looking for painting, sculpture, jewelry, pottery, photography, mixed media, or ceramics, be sure to get your map from <https://rawartcollective.org/artiststudiotour>. Tour hours are from 10am to 6pm.

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. Thank you for listening.