

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend. This is Jim Burke with local news and commentary for Thursday, September 26, 2024.

From the *Peninsula Daily News*: Efforts to conserve the Dungeness watershed will take center stage Friday at the Dungeness River Festival. The event is open to the public from 10:30am to 2:30pm at the Dungeness River Nature Center in Railroad Bridge Park, 1943 West Hendrickson Road in Sequim. Montana Napier, the Nature Center's education manager, said there will be 19 booths with hands-on displays and activities and an overall theme to "connect people with their watershed." Some of the groups planning to attend include: the Peninsula Chapter of the Backcountry Horsemen of Washington (with horses, a mule, a donkey and a miniature horse); the U.S. Forest Service; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge; National Park Service; Clallam County Marine Resources Committee; the North Olympic Salmon Coalition; Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, and more.

Napier said the organizations' representatives will be available to answer questions about the Dungeness watershed and the Olympic Peninsula's natural resources. Napier said, "[This] wouldn't be possible without all the agencies working hard to protect the watershed. We're thankful to have them involved. For more information about the River Festival and Dungeness River Nature Center, visit <https://dungenessrivercenter.org/>.

Also from the *PDN*: the candidates for the 24th Legislative District state senate position discussed a variety of political topics at the Port Angeles Business Association at Joshua's Restaurant at a candidate forum Tuesday morning.

State Rep. Mike Chapman, Democrat of Port Angeles, said he has 34 years of uninterrupted public service.

Marcia Kelbon, Republican of Quilcene, has worked as a chemical engineer, an attorney, and a businesswoman, and said, "I have a skill set with this technical, legal, and business background that I think can address some of the challenges we have."

Both candidates are running for the position currently held by Kevin Van De Wege, Democrat of Lake Sutherland. The candidates disagreed about the impacts of the Climate Commitment Act (CCA), which set a cap-and-trade program for carbon emissions, according to the state Department of Ecology.

Kelbon said the CCA is the number one driver of inflation. She said, "The act needs to be neutered or amended." She said she would support Initiative 2117, which aims to repeal the CCA on the November 5 ballot. Instead of the CCA, she said environmental issues should be addressed through investments in new technology.

Chapman said the CCA has established Washington as a leader in the clean energy market and is not the primary driver of inflation, and he said, "The CCA is investing in future energy sources, and it's working. This is not a bill we're going to see repealed because Washington doesn't go back. We are a future-driven economy and we're going to be a leader."

For future local energy sources, Chapman said innovation will result in every property having individual battery storage capacity that can help provide energy needs. Kelbon said small modular nuclear reactors could be a potential future energy source, if they prove to be safe. She said she does not know of any energy source that doesn't come with some cost.

Kelbon said she thinks rent stabilization would have unintended negative consequences that would drive landlords to sell their homes or turn them into short-term rentals. Instead, she said the government should focus on increasing the supply of available housing by limiting building regulations.

Chapman said rent stabilization would protect vulnerable individuals and said, “Most of us [the people in the 24th district] are one paycheck away, one lost job away, from not being able to afford housing.”

Candidates also differed in their support for Initiative 2109, which aims to repeal the capital gains tax.

The candidates also discussed ways that the state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) should manage its land, and both candidates agreed that the DNR should protect local watersheds. Because she is not a career politician, Kelbon said she’s not worried about being re-elected in the future. She said, “If people don’t want me after the first four years, I’m gone. Or they can keep me. I don’t care.” Chapman said he has a “Tremendous track record of working together finding solutions. Public service above self is what I’ve made my life. I’m offering myself one more time.”

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.