

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend. This is Jim Burke with local news and commentary for Tuesday, October 1, 2024.

Coming up next Monday, October 7 is a report to the Board of County Commissioners of Jefferson County by Dr. Allison Berry and Willie Bence, Director of Emergency Management. As always you can submit questions to contactus@kptz.org by this Friday at noon. In light of the fact that Helene hit Florida and then continued its devastation all the way up into Asheville, North Carolina, you might want to ask a question about emergency preparedness with Willie Bence. That's contactus@kptz.org by Friday at noon.

This is from the *Peninsula Daily News* last Friday. Animal Control departments from three agencies have seized 130 cats from a Brinnon property. The cats, seized last Wednesday by agencies in Jefferson County, Clallam County, and Sequim, are sheltering and receiving treatment at Center Valley Animal Rescue in Quilcene.

The Jefferson County Sheriff's Office is investigating second-degree animal cruelty, a gross misdemeanor which can result in up to 364 days in jail and fines up to \$5,000, Sgt. Ryan Menday said. Charges have not been filed in the case. Initial concerns were flagged when Jefferson County Health Department staff noticed more than 100 cats on the property during a septic system investigation, Menday said. After receiving the report, animal control deputy Erik Allen went to the property to investigate, Menday said, "The health department went to this property in Brinnon and then reported what their observations were to our animal control officer, who then went out there and began an investigation after he observed what he estimated to be over 100 cats roaming around this property, living in various outbuildings and vehicles. Obviously, there was concern for the safety and well-being of the animals, and the ability of the occupants of the property to care for them."

After determining that there was probable cause, Allen pursued and received a warrant from Jefferson County Superior Court to seize the cats. Allen is the only person in the Jefferson County animal control department, Menday said. With so many animals, it was necessary for the department to reach out to neighboring animal control departments in Clallam County and Sequim. The property has several residences on it, but one person had the majority of the animals, said Menday, who noted that in addition to the 130 cats seized, 12 cats were released after initial seizure, making a total of 140 to 145 cats. The 12 cats were released because they did not belong to the person under investigation.

Menday said, "That is a very large endeavor, 140-something cats. They are evidence, so we have to round them up one by one, tag them, catalog them, try to make sure they are getting all of them, and then they are probably making several trips back and forth to Center Valley Animal Rescue from Brinnon, with each of these cats in a kennel."

Menday said, Some were treated for fleas and other tests are pending and was quoted further: "Those results will be submitted as evidence. Once we've gathered all of the information and we've got the lab results back, we will submit our final report to the prosecuting attorney's office and they will ultimately have the say whether or not there will be any criminal charges filed in this case."

He said people may ask if they can adopt the cats, but for now, that isn't the case. Mendy continued to say, "The cats are still seized by the sheriff's office at this time, and it won't be until there is some kind of a disposition for any type of a criminal case that they will be able to allow them to really do much with the animals, as far as provide them back to the owner or they're available to be adopted."

End of story, for now.

On Saturday, October 19 from 5 to 10pm at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds there is a dance party to celebrate Ballot Day. It's called Joyful Warriors and features, Kalin Wulff & The Shift and the other band – Kid Avenue with Ave Avelino, Aki VA, Kevyn Rubio, and Tomiko Sage. It is an event to encourage younger people to vote and there is going to be onsite voter registration. Free entry to the event to anyone registering to vote or bringing a food donation for Foodstock. All ages, family-friendly, nonpartisan.

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news Monday through Friday at noon and 5pm and at noon on Saturday. You can reach out to us at news@kptz.org. This is Jim Burke. Thanks for listening.