

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend. I'm Jim Burke with your local news and commentary for Thursday, October 17, 2024.

Did you feel it? No, we did not have an earthquake here in Washington State at 10:17 this morning but there was a drill for an earthquake. The Great Shakeout is a statewide emergency prep drill that happens every third Thursday in October, here in Washington and in other states nationwide to get everyone to practice what to do in an earthquake. Go to: <https://www.shakeout.org/washington/> for more information about steps you can take to be ready (for the big one, or even a little one...)

A new sailing schedule that better reflects the needs of the Anacortes and San Juan Islands communities is about to set sail. Beginning October 29, vehicle reservations will open for an updated winter sailing schedule. The new schedule will change for the island communities beginning on December 29. This is the first seasonal schedule to go into effect for 2025.

Washington State Ferries (WSF) has worked for nearly two years to update the sailing schedules for the Anacortes/San Juan Islands route. Between public outreach and collaborating with a community task force group, WSF created a sailing schedule that better reflects the needs of the community including daily winter interisland service. The new sailing schedule features a more realistic timetable that will help vessels stay on schedule along with making crewing schedules more manageable.

The current sailing schedules haven't been updated for over a decade, a period that has seen the Anacortes/San Juan Islands communities grow and evolve. WSF's sailing schedules were no longer serving the area in an efficient manner. Through a strong process of coordination with external and internal groups, WSF has put together an updated sailing schedule that will benefit many for personal, professional, and recreational purposes. Early in the development process, goals were established with the community task force. The final product reflects the implementation of many of those goals. The spring sailing schedule begins March 23, 2025, with the new summer sailing schedule starting June 15, 2025. Reservations for each season will be available two months prior to the start of the sailing schedule.

WSF, a division of the Washington State Department of Transportation, is the largest ferry system in the U.S. and safely and efficiently carries tens of millions of people a year through some of the most majestic scenery in the world. For the latest service updates, sign up for rider alerts and track each ferry using the real-time map online (<https://wsdot.com/ferries/schedule/scheduledetailbyroute.aspx?route=ana-sj>).

In the *Peninsula Daily News* this morning: Aerial search crews located the wreckage of the EA-18G Growler that crashed on Tuesday. The crash site, located just after 12:30pm Wednesday, rests on a mountainside east of Mount Rainier. The status of the two crew members is unknown while the search effort continues, according to a press release from the U.S. Navy.

An Emergency Operations Center has been established on NAS Whidbey Island to coordinate response efforts, and the Navy is making preparations to deploy personnel to secure the remote area that is not accessible by motorized vehicles. The Navy has not identified the two crew members.

The cause of the crash, which took place after 3pm Tuesday, is under investigation, the Navy said. The Boeing EA-18G Growler, a specialized electronic attack aircraft, is part of the Navy's "first line of defense in hostile environments," according to its website. It is used by the VAQ-130 squadron, the oldest electronic warfare squadron in the U.S. Navy, known as the "Zappers."

The squadron had returned to Whidbey Island from a recent deployment, the Navy said in a statement on Tuesday. It had carried out operations in the Southern Red Sea, Bab el-Mandeb Strait, and the Gulf of Aden to "maintain the freedom of navigation in international waterways." That was from a previous press release. During the nine-month deployment, the squadron had conducted nearly 700 combat missions to "degrade the Houthi capability to threaten innocent shipping," the release said.

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 by writing to us at news@kptz.org. I'm Jim Burke. Thanks for listening.