

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant with news and commentary for Tuesday, October 22, 2024.

This just in: Two local veterinarians have donated five acres of forested land earmarked to construct a new Jefferson County Humane Society building in Port Hadlock. The Humane Society currently operates the animal shelter at 112 Critter Lane in Port Townsend. The cramped facility, built in 1994, is located on three acres between the gun range and the city's transfer station. Because of wetlands on the property, it cannot expand. And while some improvements are planned, the facility continues to stretch its current resources.

Dr. Joyce Murphy and Dr. Virginia Johnson, who formerly worked together in their Hadlock Veterinary Center practice, have donated the parcel deed to Jefferson County. It faces Highway 19 across from the entry to Irondale Road. Electricity and water are already in place. Dr. Murphy said the land is a great central location for a new shelter. It's on the main road, easy to find, and a good spot for signage. And the Humane Society desperately needs to expand to serve a growing county.

The Humane Society will apply to the county for a conditional use permit before proceeding with a building plan. The land will also undergo a percolations test to determine viability for a septic system after which time it will enter the permitting process and hire an architect. Fundraising will begin in 2025, but there are no projections for total cost or opening date at this time. The Humane Society of Jefferson County WA is a 501(c)3 non-profit funded primarily by individual donations, grants, and an annual \$50,000 stipend from the County. It is not affiliated with the Humane Society of the United States, nor does it receive funds from that organization.

It is now two weeks until Election Day. Registered voters who have not yet received a ballot should contact the elections office directly at 360-385-9117. Unregistered voters can register online or by mail until next Monday, October 28, and can register in person up to 8pm on Election Day, November 5. Jefferson county voters demonstrate their positions with yard signs, which now dot the roads of our rural paradise. Signs in Port Townsend almost universally support Democratic candidates, while preferences are more diverse once you get out of town. Locally we need to be grateful for the county's sign ordinances, which prohibit signs on the right of way. This isn't true in King County, where every intersection is clogged with a confusing mix of random signs.

Bruce Cowan, the Democratic Party chair for the 24th Legislative District, said that signs are an important part of political expression due to the lack of local media. We have no radio stations or broadcast outlets that accept political advertisements, so candidates are frustrated in getting their messages to the public. KPTZ, as a public radio station, does not carry such advertising. We also have just two local newspapers which, with all due respect, are read by a fraction of the local population. Cowan told KPTZ that signs make a big difference in rural areas. They create an impression of a strong campaign. And while random signs on the side of the road might not make a big impression, Cowan said that yard signs can affect decisions. If there is someone you respect with signs supporting a particular candidate you may follow suit. Cowan said that people have usually made up their minds about supporting the top of the ticket, but down-ballot contests aren't always certain. So these signs can alter these choices.

KPTZ 91.9 FM provides local news Monday through Friday at noon and 5pm and at noon on Saturdays. You can contact us at news@kptz.org. I'm Charlie Bermant. Thank you for listening.