

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker with your local news and commentary for Friday, November 1, 2024.

The Port Townsend *Leader* reports that Jefferson County has joined the growing list of statewide municipalities that cannot recycle glass after a crucial link in the regional recycling chain closed its doors.

The County has been shipping its glass since 2006 to Strategic Materials, a Seattle-based recycling processor. But Strategic has stopped accepting glass because Ardagh, their largest buyer, closed its Seattle plant last month. Ardagh cited ongoing pressure from low-priced imports from China, Chile, and Mexico as the reason for the closure. But market conditions have also changed radically since consumer backlash against a Bud Light marketing campaign featuring a transgender spokesperson resulted in a boycott and an estimated \$1 billion loss in sales for Anheuser-Busch. Ardagh claims the Bud Light issues were not responsible for the closure.

After being notified of the closure, the county's public works department began stockpiling glass but hit capacity two weeks later. Since October, the county has been paying to send the glass to a regional landfill, at a cost of approximately \$10,000 a month, money paid with revenue generated by the tipping fee for garbage disposal.

The city of Port Angeles has already suspended its household glass recycling program. For now, Jefferson County's public works department will continue to accept glass in hopes that an alternative solution will emerge.

"Making changes to the recycling program is not like turning a valve on and off," according to Al Cairns, Jefferson County's Solid Waste Manager. "It takes a lot of effort to educate the public about the how's and why's of recycling, so we don't want to make a big change only to have some new market appear and then switch back to collecting glass again."

The *Leader* also reports that the Port Townsend City Council has unanimously approved the reallocation of almost \$300,000 of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. The U.S. Department of the Treasury awarded the city \$2.7 million in ARPA funds between 2021 and 2022 to aid in recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The funds were to have been allocated by the end of this year.

At the time, city council members elected to prioritize spending the funds on supporting staff and financial sustainability and improving parks and recreation. But some expenses were less than projected, and some were allocated for projects that are not yet under contract, so the remaining funds need to be reallocated. Line items with the largest reallocations, or budget reductions, include IT infrastructure improvements, renovations at the Pink House, parking management, chamber upgrades, park vehicles, and the director of parks and recreation strategy.

The reallocated funds will go to improvements on Kearney Street, boiler repair at the Mountain View Pool, a new excavator, and professional service attorney services. Other items in the ARPA budget include money for a two-year-term long range planner, a director of parks and recreation strategy, two new police vehicles, and city hall improvements.

If you're traveling today, do take note: the last ferry to leave Port Townsend tonight will be at 6:45pm, as the 8:30pm sailing from Port Townsend and the 9:10pm from Coupeville have been cancelled due to tidal conditions. The last boat of the day from Coupeville will leave at 7:30pm.

Be sure to vote if you haven't already – and if you haven't mailed your ballot in yet but are worried about reports of firebombs in ballot boxes, have no fear: Both Clallam and Jefferson counties have fire suppressants in all their dropboxes to protect them from being vulnerable to similar incidents. For a complete list of dropbox locations check on NextDoor or contact the elections department at 360-385-9117.

Remember – Daylight Savings ends at 2am Sunday morning, so be sure to set your clocks back tomorrow night so you can enjoy that extra hour of sleep!

And finally, if you're among the 740 PUD customers in Discovery Bay who lost power this morning, reports are saying the culprit is a possible tree on the line. Kudos to the PUD crews, who were notified and already on their way at the time this broadcast was recorded.

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 and have a great weekend.