

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant with news and commentary for Election Day, Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

After this election, there will be a plethora of new legislators from top to bottom. We will have a new president, a new governor, and a new lands commissioner. Locally we will have a new member of congress, at least two new state legislators, and a new county commissioner. As of last night Jefferson County collected 73% of the ballots sent to voters, the highest in the state and the only county to exceed the 70% mark. This exceeds totals reported from Clallam County (68%) and Kitsap County (59%). The statewide return rate is just 56%, which means a lot of people are waiting until the last minute.

Another statistic reported by the Washington Secretary of State discloses that 77.7% of all registered voters over 65 have returned their ballots. Percentages fall as ages decrease, with only 34% of voters between 18 and 24 gathered. Maybe the younger generations always wait until the last minute.

The only way to register to vote today is at the auditor's office at the Jefferson County Courthouse, up until 8pm tonight. Ballots need to be dropped off, postmarked, or placed into a drop box by that time.

If it seems like we are repeating ourselves, not everyone has gotten the message. The auditor's office is operating at a frantic pace, fielding questions and visits from people needing replacement ballots, error correction, or registration. Elections coordinator Quinn Grewell said a lot of people weren't really paying attention to the issues surrounding the elections and were fired up by social media posts from one side or the other.

Initial results will be posted on the auditor's web page shortly after 8pm. tonight. It is likely that a second wave of numbers will appear Thursday or Friday; sooner if a race appears to be really close. I will report the preliminary numbers at this time tomorrow. And while the presidential race will still be up in the air, we'll have totals from Clallam County, which has correctly picked the winner in 29 of the last 33 presidential elections.

Water Street has water problems, according to the City of Port Townsend's monthly newsletter. The Water Street Sewer Replacement project is a \$2.7 million dollar grant-funded project meant to rectify a decades-old issue common to asbestos concrete pipe, which deteriorates to mush when exposed to gases from sewage.

The Water Street sewer main line collapsed in December 2022, requiring an emergency repair, and again near the ferry terminal intersection in September 2024. After the initial break in 2022, the City began applying for grants and low-interest loans to fund a sewer main replacement. With those grants in place, project staging will occur in December with construction scheduled for January.

The work is being planned for minimal impact and has been scheduled during a slower traffic season for Port Townsend. It may require temporary road closures with a detour along Washington Street. Site work will include traffic control and noise mitigation.

Questions regarding the Water Street Sewer Replacement Project should be directed to Project Manager Andre Harper (aharper@cityofpt.us). Additional details will be made available once the project schedule finalizes next month.

The City of Port Townsend Police Department will host a scam/fraud awareness and prevention training from 5pm to 6pm Wednesday, November 20 at the Red Cross Classroom adjacent to the police station. This training will include simple and effective material that will help everyone avoid falling for financial scams. The event is free to the public, but requires an RSVP to Rebecca Crosby (rcrosby@cityofpt.us).

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