

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker with your local news and commentary for Friday, December 6, 2024.

The rumor is true: the *Peninsula Daily News* tells us Fort Worden's Commons building is closing for the winter due to a failed boiler. The Commons' food, guest, and visitor services, including its Reveille Coffee Shop, will be moving to the Guardhouse on Monday while repair or replacement options are considered for the boiler. In order to continue service for the Reveille customers, the Guardhouse will now be open from 8am to 4pm Sunday through Wednesday and from 8am to 8pm Thursday through Saturday.

"Hopefully there's not too big of an impact in that day-to-day coming and getting your coffee and your pastry," said Natalie Maitland, Fort Worden Hospitality's director of operations. "That will happen over at the Guardhouse now." Though coffee drinkers will lose that living room feeling they get at the Commons, moving to the Guardhouse will mean more food options for customers. While Reveille Cafe offered espresso, breakfast pastries, and grab-and-go options, the Guardhouse will provide those options plus lunch, offering dinner in addition Thursday through Saturday. Soups and salads, flatbreads, tacos, nachos, wings, beer, wine and spirits will also be available at the Guardhouse location.

"As has been documented, there are a lot of challenges with capital needs here on the (Fort Worden) campus," Maitland said. "We've been working with parks and the receiver for next steps for getting the boiler repaired so that we can have heat restored to the Commons building." The Fort's Public Development Authority, which is currently under the management of a court-appointed receiver, is responsible for repair or replacement of the boiler, but State Parks has also stepped up and is currently assessing available solutions, she added. Not surprisingly, the receivership, which has just been extended for another 90 days, leaves key players at the park in a holding pattern as they await the outcome of those negotiations, and several park tenants are expressing concern for the future of their organizations. They need to plan ahead and can't prudently do so as long as things remain in flux.

U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA), chair of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, has joined democratic senators Markey and Blumenthal and Republican senators Cruz, Cassidy, and Blackburn in urging House Republican Leaders to pass the Kids Online Safety and Privacy Act (KOSPA) package before the end of the year. The legislation to protect children from increasing harms caused by social media has languished in the House for months after overwhelmingly passing the Senate 91 to 3 in July (<https://www.commerce.senate.gov/index.php/2024/7/senate-overwhelmingly-passes-children-s-online-privacy-legislation>).

The senators wrote in a letter to House Speaker Mike Johnson and Majority Leader Steve Scalise, "While the internet and digital tools have helped kids connect with others and the world around them, these benefits have come at a profound cost – our children are experiencing emotional, mental, and physical harm from their use of digital platforms. Studies show the more time youth spend on social media, the greater risk they will suffer from poor mental health, disordered eating, and diminished sleep quality. These risks are multiplied because social media platforms are designed to be addictive, so that kids will spend more time online."

The KOSPA package combines two key pieces of legislation. The first bans online companies from collecting personal information from users under 17 years old without their consent and creates an eraser button to eliminate personal information online. The second component provides children and parents with the tools, safeguards, and transparency to protect against online harms, establishes a duty of care for online platforms, and

requires the most protective settings for kids by default. “KOSPA proves that Congress can set aside politics and act decisively when our children are at stake,” the letter continued. “We ask that you join the 91 United States Senators who put the well-being of our children ahead of tech companies and bring KOSPA to the House floor for a vote.”

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.