

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Jim Burke with your local news and commentary for Thursday, December 26, 2024.

Happy Boxing Day everyone! Happy second day of Christmas, Happy Kwanzaa, Happy Hanukkah! So, you might have noticed if you live on the Quimper Peninsula, that it was quite windy yesterday. And if you went out and about to celebrate Christmas with friends and loved ones, you may have noticed a lot of debris around Jefferson County. Yesterday morning I noticed a Coast Guard helicopter circling over by the marina here in Port Townsend.

This is from KIRO 7 News: Crews with the U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Port Angeles pulled a man and his dog to safety after their sailboat ran aground in Port Townsend Bay on Christmas Day. According to the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office (JCSO), around 7am Christmas morning, a passerby called to report a man in distress between the Port of Port Townsend and the Port Townsend Paper Mill. That passerby said that the man, struggling to navigate his sailboat in the strong winds, had requested help. Despite the sailor's best efforts, JCSO reports that the sailboat ran aground near the Larry Scott Trail, and both the man and his canine companion were stranded on the vessel, surrounded by crashing waves. A U.S. Coast Guard rescue swimmer arrived to help, successfully leading the two to safety and bringing them onto shore unharmed. U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Northwest congratulated the team on the successful rescue, saying, "A holiday partner story with an excellent ending! Bravo zulu (this means "well done") to this team!"

And...you also might have noticed the clock tower of the Jefferson County Courthouse has gone silent. I reached out to my co-hosts for *County Connections* (Fridays at 12:30pm) and Commissioner Heidi Eisenhour confirmed that the clock is now silent. She said in an email, "The clock in the tower is not working because one of the teeth on a gear is broken. They had to stop it until it could be repaired as to not damage it beyond repair."

From the *Peninsula Daily News*: The first step toward rebuilding a Hurricane Ridge Day Lodge in Olympic National Park came Saturday morning when President Joe Biden signed a stopgap funding package. The measure averted a government shutdown by extending current federal spending through March 14 and provided \$100 billion in emergency assistance to areas hit hard by hurricanes and other natural disasters.

Part of that emergency assistance included an \$80 million secured by Sen. Patty Murray, D-Seattle for the day lodge project. Murray, chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, had impressed upon her colleagues the need for federal funding for a new facility ever since the lodge was destroyed by fire on May 7, 2023. The 72-year-old lodge was undergoing a \$10.8 million renovation when the fire broke out. A report released in December of last year stated that the precise cause could not be determined; among the possibilities were lithium-ion batteries that had overheated while charging and/or electrical panels exposed to water and corrosion that subsequently failed.

Hurricane Ridge is one of the most popular tourist attractions on the Olympic Peninsula, drawing 2.9 million visitors in 2023 and making a \$279 million impact on the local economy, according to the National Park Service. Olympic National Park was the most-visited national park in the state in 2023. Rainier National Park was second with 1.7 million visitors. Among the challenges facing the project is the site itself, which is accessible by a single road that passes through three tunnels. Construction work of almost any magnitude will be limited to a narrow window squeezed between brutal winters and busy summers. Sites of cultural

significance to the Port Gamble S’Klallam, Jamestown S’Klallam, and Lower Elwha Klallam tribes also have been identified at Hurricane Ridge. A memorandum of understanding (MOA) between the tribes and Olympic National Park and the Washington Historical Preservation Officer regarding a project commencing in spring of 2025 required archaeological monitoring and screening of all excavation material for artifacts. However, the MOA did note that, “No burial sites, human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony are known to be within the immediate project area.”

A reminder that the BOCC public health report is Monday January 6 at 9:45am during the Jim B. Show. Send your questions to Dr. Allison Berry or Director Willie Bence by Friday, January 3 at noon at contactus@kptz.org.

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. This is Jim Burke. Thanks for listening.