

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker with your local news and commentary for Thursday, March 6, 2025.

\*\*\*

Fort Worden and other Washington state parks may soon become more expensive to visit: The Washington State *Standard* reports that State Senate lawmakers are looking to increase the price of the Discover Pass from \$30 to \$45 to adjust for inflation. If enacted, this would be the first price hike for the pass since it was introduced in 2011. Originally created to compensate for budget cuts from the 2008 recession, the Discover Pass currently brings in around \$30 million annually. 84% of that revenue goes to Washington State Parks, with the rest going to the Departments of Fish and Wildlife and Natural Resources. If the bill passes the Senate and gains House approval, the price hike will start in July.

\*\*\*

Last Saturday a regulator failure caused more than 3,000 Jeffco PUD customers to lose power. The outage started at 7:05am, and though electricity was restored for many customers by noon, some were left powerless for over 12 hours. Customers along Hastings Avenue were the last to be re-energized, partly due to their proximity to the Hastings substation, where a three-phase regulator had failed Friday evening. The regulator, which was manufactured in 1969, was inherited when the grid was acquired from Puget Sound Energy (PSE) in 2013 and has been carefully maintained ever since, but had to be replaced with three new regulators.

Aging infrastructure and growing demand are a big focus for the PUD, which is currently finalizing a 4-year work plan. Outages like Saturday's highlight the need to address energy load and replacement of key components.

\*\*\*

On Monday of this week, Port Townsend Police Chief Thomas Olson presented the 2024 Annual Crime Report to council members and the public. The report showed crime was down 8% from 2023, but traffic stops were up 15%, while traffic stops with issued tickets increased 27%. Criminal traffic stops were up 66%, but DUIs were down from 21 in 2023 to nine in 2024. Collisions were up 12% from the previous year, with the top three locations for collisions being on Water Street and West Sims Way at Haines Place and Kearney Street.

The department received over 8900 calls for service in 2024. There were more robberies and assaults reported in 2024 than in 2023, but reports of burglary, arson, larceny, and sex offenses were down. Motor vehicle theft remained the same, with 11 cases reported in both years.

Although four officers resigned from the department in 2024, another four were hired, and three additional officers are currently in training, so the department will soon be fully staffed for the first time in at least a decade. The department has also acquired two new patrol vehicles, a new drone, and critical incident equipment, including ballistic helmets and shields for crisis situations.

\*\*\*

And finally, following President Trump's Wednesday address to Congress, Washington State's Senator Cantwell released the following statement: "President Trump promised to deal with consumer costs and inflation, but we got no ideas tonight on how he's going to make life more affordable for average Americans. Instead, he's proposing things that will increase costs. New tariffs, cuts to critical programs like Medicaid and

Social Security, and threatening core services like weather forecasting and aviation safety are all bad for our safety and our economy.”

Congresswoman Emily Randall’s statement reads as follows: “The President’s speech tonight was one lie after the other. He thinks he can say one thing and do another, and he thinks that we aren’t experiencing the chaos, confusion, and delusion of his administration every day. “Leaders,” she added, “Don’t fight to take away people’s health care. Leaders don’t degrade federal workers. Leaders don’t abandon allies in times of struggle. Leaders don’t cause chaos – they prevent it. This administration and its enablers want us to look away, to give up, to give in. I refuse. I will continue to fight to bring your voices to Congress, to work with colleagues – any colleagues who are willing – to hold President Trump accountable. When it comes to our community, I won’t back down.”

\*\*\*

KPTZ 91.9 FM broadcasts your local news Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at noon and 5pm. You can contact us at [news@kptz.org](mailto:news@kptz.org). I’m Diane Walker. Thank you for listening.