

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant with news and commentary for Thursday, March 13, 2025.

The longest serving elected official in Jefferson County will run for reelection this year. Jill Buhler Reinstra, a member of the Jefferson Healthcare Board of Commissioners for 30 years, announced she will run for another six-year term as her work guiding the hospital is not yet complete. Buhler Reinstra is 79, and will be 85 at the end of her term if she is reelected. She told KPTZ that she is ready for the task and that age is not a good predictor of ability. She is committed to seeing projects through to their completion, and that it will take experienced leaders to navigate what may come down from DC. Buhler Reinstra said the foundation of health is the foundation of every community. If you don't have a good health care system you won't have a good community. She said that Jefferson Healthcare is one of the few critical access hospitals in the state that has full range of cancer treatment.

The 56,000 square-foot expansion project, originally scheduled to open January of this year and now expected this summer, includes specialty services such as pulmonology, neurology, dermatology, ENT (ear, nose, throat), radiation oncology, a state-of-the-art MRI machine, and a linear accelerator. This is a tremendous advantage for patients who previously had to travel an hour or more to receive specialty care, according to a statement on the hospital's web page.

Also taking place will be the hospital cafeteria opening to the public for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic. It was the only place in town where you could get a gourmet dinner for two for under \$15, although prices will certainly exceed that at the reopening. The project is the hospital's second major expansion in a decade. Both were under the auspices of its CEO, Mike Glenn.

A so-called mixed-use multigenerational community moved closer to fruition with its designation as environmentally safe. The Peace Hill Development at the corner of Discovery Road and San Juan Avenue, could include 179 dwelling units and as many as 29 accessory dwelling units (ADUs), a 13,200 square-foot combined child care and elder care facility, a 5,000 square-foot community art center, a 5,000-square-foot community agricultural center with a three-quarter acre community farm, all on twelve acres, according to a report in yesterday's Port Townsend *Leader*.

The property was formerly owned by the late Carl Nomura, a prominent Jefferson County resident, and was recognizable by a lawnmower-sculpted peace sign etched into the hill. Nomura's daughter, Teri Nomura, is an advisor to the project. The Port Townsend Preservation alliance is managing the project. For more information go to <https://ptpalliance.org/>.

Local PUD customers should prepare themselves for imminent rate hikes. The utility reported that \$73 million in capital improvements over the next four years along with the increase in wholesale energy prices has led to a rate study discussion, now in progress. The PUD hired a consultant to provide an updated cost service study, which concluded that existing rates can cover operations but not long term capacity improvements. Further rate discussions and voting on the proposed increases are on the board's Spring agendas, with rate increases planned for June of this year.

The Port Townsend Department of Public works recently announced the completion of one phase of the Water Street sewer replacement project, as the drilling and underground pipe installation is now accomplished. According to the city's monthly utilities newsletter, the biggest obstacle came from rock formations of various sizes. While these obstacles were expected, drilling through and around them proved to be labor intensive. It's still something of a traffic nightmare, so it's best to access downtown by looping around on Washington Street. The project is scheduled for a May completion.

KPTZ 91.9 FM broadcasts local news Tuesday through Thursday at noon and 5pm. You can contact us at news@kptz.org. I'm Charlie Bermant. Thank you for listening.