

This is KPTZ FM 91.9 in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Nhatt Nichols, bringing you news and commentary from the Jefferson County *Beacon* for Wednesday, July 30, 2025.

Much of the West Coast of the U.S. is under tsunami alerts, after a magnitude 8.8 earthquake hit the Kamchatka Peninsula in Russia Tuesday night. Tsunami warnings were immediately issued for Japan, Hawaii, and the west coast, with waves up to one foot higher than normal expected in Port Townsend, according to the National Weather Service in Seattle at 10pm last night.

The waves hit La Push and the Strait Juan de Fuca at around 12.30am this morning and were only slightly larger than what is normally expected for that region. They also warned of "strong and unusual currents," primarily along the outer Washington coast, and though no significant flooding is expected, it's advisable to stay away from coastal areas until the current tsunami advisory is lifted. The tsunami warning has not deterred the Paddle to the Elwha, the Annual Tribal Canoe Journey that this year is being hosted by the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe. Canoes left Fort Worden beach this morning.

In Port Townsend Library news, over a year of negotiations came to completion on Monday, July 21, when a resolution for the collective bargaining agreement with City Council and city library employees, represented by Local Union No. 589 of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters for General Government Employees, was approved.

In 2023, the employees of the Port Townsend Public Library voted to unionize. Their choice includes them as part of the labor movement of the greater library community, joining the Sno-Isle Libraries and Kitsap Regional Library in becoming union members.

Melody Sky Weaver has been the library director for ten years. In January, she became the Community Service Director for the Creative District as part of consolidations aimed at keeping the budget for both the Library and the Parks and Facilities Department within limits.

Pre-union Library Assistants, who often fill tasks outside of their wage range, have felt frustrated and concerned about the library's dire financial state, which is used to justify what appears to be the suppression of existing staff wages and advancement. Staffing accounts for 31% of the library's budget, and the Property tax levy, the largest source of funding for the library, only grows by 1% per year, and restricts funding from any other source. With inflation costs far outstripping the amount of funds raised through property taxes, wages have suffered. According to Weaver, now that the contract has been approved, library staff will be earning wages above the market rate of neighboring libraries. Weaver expressed her excitement over the union contract saying, "There is a positive movement nationally and regionally for libraries unionizing as part of the labor movement of the time. It is very exciting for the library to be fully integrated into the City."

And finally, do you have an opinion about the condition and safety of the roads in Jefferson County. Do you want your viewpoint regarding its funding to be heard by County voters? Well, read on, because Jefferson County wants you. The County is seeking volunteers to serve on "For" and "Against" committees for a potential Transportation Benefit District (TBD) ballot measure. These committees will draft the official voter statements that appear in the local voters' pamphlet for the November 4, 2025 General Election. The proposed measure

would add an additional 0.2% sales tax in unincorporated Jefferson County, or twenty cents for every \$100 spent, for county road system preservation and safety.

Monte Reinders, the Public Works Director for Jefferson County, explained that at least two-thirds of the money raised would be used to fund chip sealing and paving projects, which are the difference between roads that are driveable and roads that are degraded with potholes. The remainder of the funds would be used for a variety of activities, including roadway pavement markings, purchasing reliable equipment to perform road and maintenance activities like sweeping, brush cutting, mowing, snow and ice control, and grading gravel roads. It would also allow them to continue to acquire grants to pay for essential road upkeep like replacing failing steel culverts, most of which are well over 60 years old. By state law, the county appoints both a pro (For) and con (Against) committee before the measure is placed on the ballot. This is your opportunity to ensure the community's voice is heard. Please communicate your interest as soon as possible by email to cao@co.jefferson.wa.us.

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon and 5 Tuesday through Thursday, partnering on Wednesday to bring you stories from jeffcobeacon.com. You can submit ideas to the *Beacon* through info@jeffcobeacon.com. This is Nhatt Nichols. Thanks for listening.