

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker, with your local news and commentary for Tuesday, August 5, 2025.

Fire crews continue to fight two large fires in Mason County:

- The Bear Gulch Fire is located near the north side of Lake Cushman in Olympic National Forest, and as of Sunday morning it was sitting at about 4,760 acres with only 3% contained. The fire is expected to continue to burn until it is extinguished by repeated rainfall and snow in the fall. The USDA Forest Service is seeking information about the possible origin of the Bear Gulch Fire, which began on the evening of Sunday, July 6, at Lake Cushman along FS-24 near the Bear Gulch Day Use Area. Anyone in the area at that time who may have information is encouraged to contact the Forest Service Tipline at 541-618-2154.
- The Hamma Fire, which emerged along FS-2480 in the Hamma Hamma drainage on state-managed land, is burning in 57 acres with 0% containment, although officials said that firelines had been completed. Aviation resources are actively assisting both fires, with helicopters pulling water from Lake Cushman and the Hamma Hamma River to cool hot spots.

In response to the Bear Gulch Fire, crews have wrapped a suspension bridge and several houses, and are installing sprinklers along the North Fork Skokomish River Trail.

Given how dry this summer has been to date, officials are urging residents to use extreme caution when performing work outdoors, especially in the middle of the day. Mowing, weed trimming, or welding can easily ignite a fire under current conditions. If necessary, fire officials recommend conducting work early in the morning and continuing to monitor the weather closely.

The Peninsula Home Fund has announced it will be distributing \$90,000 in grants to 15 non-profit agencies in Jefferson and Clallam Counties. Jefferson County recipients include Bayside Housing and Services, the Kathleen Sutton Fund, Olympic Peninsula YMCA, and St. Vincent de Paul. Originally established in 1989 by the *Peninsula Daily News*, the Peninsula Home Fund is now administered by the Olympic View Community Foundation, and the grants are entirely composed of donations from local community members.

If you do not have a dentist but need dental assistance, Jefferson County Public Health reports that the Arcora Foundation SmileMobile will be at the Tri Area Community Center on West Valley Road in Chimacum this week and next week. The dental team will see children and adult family members with Apple health or no insurance for dental exams, oral health education, fluoride varnishes, sealants, extractions, filing, and x-rays at no cost to the patients. Call 888-286-9105 to schedule your free dental appointment.

And, speaking of Apple Health, Washington State Standard reports that the Washington Health Care Authority, which administers Apple Health and is responsible for purchasing and coordinating health care services for 2.7 million Washington residents, has announced that state budget cuts and the new federal rules around Medicaid funding will likely bring about workforce reductions in the near future. The Agency employs roughly 1900 individuals at this time.

For those members of our audience who have expressed concern about the possible effect of closing the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) on KPTZ, KPTZ Board President John Pinnow reports that the impact for KPTZ is less immediate than for many community and public broadcast stations, as KPTZ does not receive any CPB funding. We do, however, benefit from a number of CPB efforts – negotiating music rights, for example, so with the dismantling of the CPB there will surely be side effects in the months to come. Pinnow promises to keep us posted.

And finally, today marks the last day you can vote in the primary election. There are three candidates vying for the open seat left by Ben Thomas on Port Townsend City Council: Fred Obee, Mikki Porter, and Dylan Quarles. This is a nonpartisan race, and the top two vote-getters will then advance to the general election in November.

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