

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker, with your local news and commentary for Thursday, August 7, 2025.

This weekend marks the return of the Jefferson County Fair: three days of events, 4-H exhibitions, entertainment, games for kids, and more. Gates open at 8am, and the fair opens at 10, closing at 8pm Friday and Saturday and at 6 on Sunday. Some of the many activities featured at the fair will include a 4-H cat building with cat vet checks; birds of prey, music and ballet performances; draft horse pulls and 4x4 mud drags; glass-blowing, weaving, and home arts demonstrations; a jam and jelly contest; kids bingo and other kids activities; a cat knowledge bowl, a kids mechanical bull, and a Sasquatch walk-around; horse shows, llama shows, and an FFA (Future Farmers of America) beef show. Fun for the whole family!

For those who took the time to vote in the primary election, the results are in: Fred Obee and Dylan Quarles will be advancing to the general election this fall.

A recent walkthrough of the unsanctioned homeless encampment behind the state's Department of Social and Health Services building on Evans Vista has raised some significant public safety concerns. According to the *Peninsula Daily News*, the encampment has grown from 30 people last November to around 100 now, and a walkthrough there has revealed unreported tent fires – some alarmingly close to propane tanks. In addition, Port Townsend Police Chief Thomas Olsen reports his department has had 155 calls for service from the area this year, almost doubling calls from the previous year. The city has funded portable bathrooms and dumpster service to the site, but Robert Wittenberg, East Jefferson Fire Rescue's community risk manager, has suggested providing refillable water-based fire extinguishers, providing education on proper heating and cooking, and working to build trust with residents so they're not afraid to call 911 in the event of an emergency.

Julia Cochrane, founder and director of the Winter Welcoming Center, noted that with many housing subsidies ending and current state and national budget cuts, the encampment may grow substantially more by 2026. Cochrane recommends using publicly owned land to do a supported encampment, with camp grids, sani-cans, dumpsters, access to water for fire safety and drinking, and access to electricity – at least for charging devices and wi-fi.

Beulah Kingsolver, executive director of Dove House Recovery Cafe, which does case management for a lot of the people in the encampments, has added that while the Cafe offers showers in partnership with the YMCA, laundry has become a huge issue. Kingsolver recommended making laundry facilities available in local community centers. In response to the concerns expressed, Port Townsend City Council passed two motions in this week's Monday meeting: one directing the Housing Fund Board to reopen public outreach and conversations pertaining to local solutions to homelessness, and the other directing the board to consider a low-barrier shelter as a priority.

Now that Centrum's summer arts program at the fort is winding down, Centrum leaders have entered into discussions with the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, hoping to negotiate a long-term lease before their intended November launch of a \$2.4 million restoration project. In the meantime, according to state officials, other tenants will remain under short-term agreements.

The *Washington State Standard* reports that Washington's new work-zone speed cameras have cited 7,000 drivers in their first 90 days of use. Only 262 of those infractions resulted in fines, as first-time violators don't have to pay anything, but officials hope the cameras will get drivers to slow down and keep workers safe. At the same time, the state is also counting on \$138 million in fines over the next six years. The cameras, which were installed due to a reported 1,300 work zone crashes annually, are expected to record over 250,000 infractions a year.

And finally, the Jefferson County Courthouse in Port Townsend will get its historic front doors refinished next week. The doors, which have weathered decades of use and coastal exposure, are original to the Courthouse, which was built in 1892 and is listed on the national register of historic places.

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.