

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker, with your local news and commentary for Tuesday, August 19, 2025.

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At approximately 6:05am this past Friday morning, a county employee contacted 911 to report a burglary at the county courthouse. Deputies from the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office (JCSO), along with officers from the Port Townsend Police Department (PTPD) and Washington State Patrol (WSP) responded immediately to secure and clear the building. An initial investigation determined that at around 1am, an individual dressed in dark clothing broke a window to gain entry into the courthouse. Once inside, the suspect forced entry into the Sheriff's Civil Office, where he stole several pieces of law enforcement equipment, including a key to an unmarked patrol vehicle. The suspect then used the stolen key to take the vehicle and fled the scene. The suspect and the stolen patrol car were later located near Forks. All stolen property was recovered. The suspect, identified as Andrew Gaikowski, 34, of Jefferson County, was taken into custody without incident.

Sheriff Andy Pernsteiner praised the efforts of those involved, stating, "Due to excellent investigative work by JCSO Detective Sergeant Derek Allen, Detective Brian Anderson, and Deputy Gordon Tamura, the subject who committed this offense was quickly identified, located, and safely taken into custody. I'd like to thank our great team at JCSO and our partners at PTPD and WSP for their swift and professional assistance." The investigation is ongoing, and charges are pending.

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Despite the rain over the weekend, the Bear Gulch Fire over by Lake Cushman has grown to over 8300 acres, and is still only 5% contained. Unfortunately smoke, fog, and low clouds have been hindering air operations, but the air was expected to clear enough yesterday to resume use of helicopters and drones. The south end of Lake Cushman is still open, the north end is still closed, but the return of warmer, drier weather is likely to increase the fire's surface spread as the week goes on.

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Jefferson Healthcare has announced that with the opening of its new expanded space, several clinics will be moving to the new wing of the hospital, including Dermatology, Neurology, Rheumatology, and the Wound Clinic. In addition, a new Pulmonology Service and OBGYN services will move to the new wing and an infectious disease clinic will open as of September 2. Later this fall, a new Radiation Oncology service will also be available in the new wing.

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The State Department of Fish and Wildlife has awarded a grant of over \$270,000 to be used to complete conceptual and preliminary designs for restoration of the Little Quilcene River estuary. Proposed restoration actions could include removal of a levee, construction of channels for the Little Quilcene River, reconnection of salt marsh habitat, placement of logjams, removal of blockages in fish migration routes, and replanting riverbanks and pastureland. The restoration is expected to benefit Hood Canal summer chum salmon and Puget Sound steelhead trout, both of which are species listed as threatened with extinction under the federal Endangered Species Act.

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Yesterday President Trump announced that he plans to sign an executive order that would eliminate mail-in voting, as well as some in-person voting machines. Washington's Senator Maria Cantwell has called the order an attempt to suppress the vote, stating that vote-by-mail is consistently the most safe and trackable method of voting, and that despite President Trump's claims to the contrary, there is no evidence that voting by mail results in increased voter fraud. Washington state started vote-by-mail in 1983, adopted optional vote-by-mail in 2005 and enacted universal vote-by-mail in 2011.

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And finally, the YMCA Pool at Mountain View is currently closed due to a mechanical failure. Facilities teams from the Y and the City are investigating the problem and working to re-open the pool as soon as possible. The issue has been isolated and parts have been ordered. When the closure status is updated it will appear at the top of the YMCA of Jefferson County's website (<https://www.olympicpeninsulaymca.org/locations/ymca-jefferson-county>).

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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.