

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker, with your local news and commentary for Thursday, August 14, 2025.

Good news on the fire front: the Dosewallips Flats Fire was 80% contained as of yesterday, and evacuation orders have been lifted. Fire crews remain on scene today, continuing to strengthen containment lines. This work will continue over the next 24 to 48 hours before the fire transitions into a patrol status.

Unfortunately, the Bear Gulch Fire over by Lake Cushman has grown another 1200 acres to almost 7400 acres and is still only 3% contained. Fire personnel on the eastern flank and southern perimeter continued to fight fire with water drops from helicopters. Crews stayed vigilant near the southern perimeter, west of Lake Cushman, engaging in structure protection and utilizing sprinkler systems. Heavy equipment operations continued fuel reduction and road improvements for fire contingency lines on the west side of the lake. Helicopters are available for precise water drops on the fire's edge to support firefighters on the ground. Drones are performing infrared imaging for heat signatures around structures and the fire perimeter.

The Bear Gulch Fire area near Dry Creek Trail is in a Level 3 "GO" evacuation. This includes the Staircase Campground and areas across the causeway on the north side of Lake Cushman; and the north half of the lake is still closed. The area south of Dry Creek has a Level 2 "BE SET" evacuation notice, and the southern half of Lake Cushman is still open to recreation.

2,675 Port Townsend customers lost power in the wee hours of Wednesday morning after a loud noise was reported at the Dana Roberts substation. Jeffco PUD dispatch and line crews responded quickly and found the culprit: a very unlucky rat in the wrong place at the wrong time. According to the PUD, animals like rats are the second most common cause of outages in our county – right behind trees contacting power lines. Power has since been fully restored, and crews are conducting followup testing on the regulators. All appears in good shape.

There's a new wrinkle in the parking issues surrounding the lot in front of Quimper Mercantile: according to the Port Townsend *Leader*, the owners of the lot have filed an appeal challenging the proposed development of a 50 room four-story hotel on Water Street. The appeal argues that the 10 parking spaces proposed for the new hotel cannot accommodate all its guests, which will exacerbate the existing parking deficit in downtown Port Townsend and lead to increased illegal parking in their lot. The appeal also alleges that the city lacked the information needed to accurately evaluate the proposal's environmental impact, particularly regarding increased traffic, traffic safety, and parking. A public hearing on the subject will be held at 9am on August 25 at Port Townsend City Hall.

Dundee Hill Community Homes, a new five-home affordable housing project, has broken ground at the corner of Hastings Avenue and Hendricks Street in Port Townsend. Built in partnership with the Olympic Housing Trust and Anderson Homes of Sequim, the five two- and three-bedroom homes will be sustainably designed for local families, seniors, and individuals who earn a local income but cannot compete in the current housing market. The community garden will remain as a backdrop for the project, and the housing units are planned to be sold at less than half their median market price, according to the Port Townsend *Leader*. Kellen Lynch,

director of development and communications for the Olympic Housing Trust, expects construction should be completed by the fall of 2026, so the new houses can be lived in by the end of next year.

And finally, the Uptown Street Fair will return to Port Townsend from 9am to 4pm this Saturday. The City will be at the Farmer's Market to talk about streets, housing, open space, trails, and more; and Fair activities will include the Port Townsend Farmers Market, the Port Townsend Arts and Crafts Guild market, kids arts and crafts from PT Artscape, live music, and a beer garden.

KPTZ personnel will join other local organizations marching in the annual "Unbelievably Brief but Colorful Parade," which will happen at 2pm. Lawrence, Tyler and Polk streets will be closed to vehicles for the event.

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.