

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker, with your local news and commentary for Thursday, September 4, 2025.

Jefferson County public health officer Dr. Allison Berry cautioned county commissioners this week that Covid-19 cases are again on the rise, adding that while staying updated on vaccinations and masking in crowded indoor spaces are the two best ways to prevent transmission of the virus, vaccines have become harder to get for people under the age of 65, thanks to drastic cuts in public health funding from both the federal and state levels.

The *Peninsula Daily News* reports that Dr. Berry has also observed a significant uptick in pertussis cases, primarily in families that are not vaccinating their children, and she expressed concern about what she referred to as the dismantling and weaponization of the public health infrastructure at the federal level. "We're seeing that the career scientists, the people who've been doing this for decades, are either stepping down or being removed and being replaced by people who may spread falsehoods to the people of this country, or agree with the people in power," Berry said. "That is a fundamental breakdown of how public health is supposed to work."

Fourteen organizations in Jefferson County have received unrestricted funding through the Community Accelerator Grant, administered by Seattle-based ArtsFund and funded by Allen Family Philanthropies, which awarded grants ranging from \$2,500 to \$25,000 to 930 Washington organizations. The funding allows nonprofits to put the money toward their most pressing needs, including programming, salaries and facility expenses. In Jefferson County the following awards were granted:

- \$5,000 to Centrum
- \$25,000 to Grace's Mahali
- \$12,500 to the Jefferson County Historical Society
- \$25,000 to the Key City Players
- \$17,500 to the Midsummer Musical Retreat Society
- \$25,000 to the Mythsinger Legacy Project
- \$17,500 to Northwind Art
- \$5,000 to the Olympic Music Festival
- \$2,500 to Port Ludlow Performing Arts
- \$17,500 to the Port Townsend Film Festival
- \$25,000 to the Port Townsend School of Woodworking
- \$25,000 to the Songwriting Works Educational Foundation
- \$5,000 to the Production Alliance, and
- \$5,000 to the Wooden Boat Foundation

According to the *Peninsula Daily News*, Brinnon Fire Department received a call late Monday evening about a possible overdose of an 18-year old woman. Responders arriving at the scene found four unconscious individuals, but no evidence of drugs. Assuming the overdoses had been caused by fentanyl, responders gave all four victims multiple doses of Narcan. They were eventually revived, although two required CPR. Two individuals were taken to Jefferson Healthcare by East Jefferson Fire Rescue and two were taken to Mason General Hospital by Central Mason Fire & EMS.

Five other individuals were present at the scene; one fled out the back door and the other four were evaluated and cleared. An infant located at the scene was taken by deputies into protective custody and transferred to Child Protective Services on Tuesday morning.

Recreational shellfish harvesting closures have been expanded since our last report, as recent tests have uncovered more sites with dangerous levels of the Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning biotoxin. Recreational harvesting of all molluscan shellfish – clams, mussels, oysters, and scallops – is now prohibited in not just Port Ludlow and Mats Mats Bay, but also in Port Townsend Bay, and the North Quimper Peninsula, including Fort Worden State Park and Point Hudson. Fort Flagler State Park is excluded from the closures.

And finally, this weekend marks the return of the annual Wooden Boat Festival, a project of Northwest Maritime, which this year will be celebrating the skill, tradition, and passion of Shipwrights, with panels, talks, and demonstrations by experts from the US, UK, and beyond. There will also be presentations on the history and techniques of traditional ropemaking, seminars on diesel engines and boat electrical systems, boat tours, movies, live music, local food vendors, and activities galore for both kids and adults. For tickets, a schedule of events, and a map of festival vendors and activities, visit <https://woodenboat.org/>.

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.