

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker, with your local news and commentary for Thursday, September 11, 2025.

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Though fire activity has decreased over the past several days, the Bear Gulch Fire continues to expand and now consumes 10,630 acres, of which less than 10% is contained. 109 fire personnel are still on site, removing hazards and performing suppression repair. The Level 2 evacuation area south of Dry Creek has been removed, but the level 3 order for homes near Dry Creek Trail remains in place.

The Tunnel Creek Fire also continues to burn and has now expanded to approximately 165 acres. There is still no current threat to structures or nearby communities, but the Tunnel Creek Trail remains closed, and crews remain on scene, actively monitoring and working the incident.

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The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) will be closing the SR 104 Hood Canal Bridge nightly to all traffic, including emergency response, from 8pm to 5:30am, starting Sunday, September 21 through Thursday, September 25. Crews will be repairing the steel tracks on which the wheels of the westbound span roll back when opening. Over time, wind, tides, and storms have caused dents in the track, which now affect the bridge's alignment. This work must be completed before storm season to keep the bridge safe and fully operational.

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According to the *Port Townsend Leader*, the body of Joel Kawahara, the Quilcene fisherman who had been missing at sea since August 8, has been found on a remote West End beach less than a mile south of the Seafeld Creek wilderness camp area, bringing the mystery of the fisherman's disappearance to a close. A memorial service is scheduled for October 26 in Quilcene for Kawahara, who had won the National Fisherman's Highliner of the Year award in 2009 and was widely regarded as a tireless champion for salmon recovery.

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Port Townsend's Triangle Mini Park I, situated just outside The Cup on Sims Way, has been officially renamed Minnie Nakano Park. Nakano, a Japanese American who passed away in 2005, lived in Port Townsend with her family on their farm in Eaglemount until they were interned during World War II at the Minidoka camp in Idaho. Their family farm still exists today. Upon her return from Minidoka, Nakano worked in the public assistance department for Jefferson County, and was instrumental in helping numerous families to settle in Port Townsend in the 60s, 70s and 80s. A dedication ceremony will be held once new signage is installed at the park.

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The *Port Townsend Leader* reports that the Jefferson County Board of Commissioners has adopted a policy to ensure that the courthouse is safe and accessible for all individuals, regardless of immigration status. With this new policy, law enforcement officers entering the courthouse – except for Jefferson County officers or those participating in court proceedings – must provide identifying information, including their purpose for being there and the action they plan to take. If they plan to arrest someone without a signed warrant, they will be denied entry.

In addition, the policy states that, except in specific, legally defined circumstances, courthouse personnel are prohibited from assisting with or supporting any civil arrest of individuals who are in, traveling to, or returning from the courthouse, including within a one-mile radius of the facility. Additionally, staff may not inquire about or collect information regarding a person's immigration or citizenship status unless it is legally required. If the information is collected, it cannot be shared unless required by law.

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Fifteen Jefferson County farms will be featured in this weekend's Jefferson County Farm Tour. Now in its 23rd year, the tour offers workshops, events, and an afterparty at Finn River with live music by the Boy Howdies. For more information, visit <https://www.theproductionalliance.org/events/farmtour>.

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And finally, after being escorted into town Tuesday by an impressive motorcade, The Wall That Heals opened today at Jefferson County Airport. The exhibit, a 3/4 scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, will remain open 24 hours a day until Sunday at 2pm.

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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.