

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker, with your local news and commentary for Tuesday, September 23, 2025.

Despite Saturday's rainfall, the Bear Gulch Fire is still growing: it now covers over 19,000 acres and is only 6% contained. Smoke from the fire is not expected to impact air quality across the Puget Sound today, but Lake Cushman and Hoodspout will continue to see smoke impacts for sensitive groups, especially during overnight and early morning hours.

Jefferson Healthcare has announced it is preparing to launch a Mobile Dental and Medical Clinic, an RV designed to bring dental and basic medical services directly to communities in the region. The mobile clinic will make regular visits to communities such as Brinnon, Quilcene, and Port Hadlock, where access to dental and other health services can be limited. While the unit is primarily designed to expand dental care, it will also be able to provide other basic services, such as primary care visits, immunizations, sports physicals, and behavioral health support. The RV is being launched in response to feedback collected last year in public forums held to determine what services would be most valuable in a mobile clinic. "The flexibility of a mobile clinic means care can be tailored to the needs of each community," said Jake Davidson, chief operating officer at Jefferson Healthcare. "Our priority is to bring services that people have told us are most needed." Once operational, a full schedule of locations and services for the mobile clinic will be released.

Jefferson County Public Health has announced that elevated levels of the toxin microcystin have been detected in a water sample taken from Crocker Lake. Exposure to microcystin can result in illness and death in people and animals when ingested, even in small amounts. Skin rashes from contact with scum are also possible. A warning sign was posted at the public boat ramp off of Highway 101 stating that the lake is not safe for people or pets. Water-based recreational activities such as fishing, boating, and swimming are not recommended until the bloom dissipates and the toxin level declines.

Jefferson County Public Health also informs us that Covid cases are on the rise again in Jefferson County. Be sure to stay up to date on your vaccines, but be sure to call ahead to your primary care provider or pharmacy to check vaccine availability.

Jefferson County PUD customers experienced two outages over the weekend. On Sunday morning an underground fault took out over 1000 customers in the Port Ludlow/Irondale area. The fault was quickly isolated, dropping the number of affected customers to around 20 along Pope Road. And the death of an unfortunate squirrel on Monday morning caused a bank to close and 233 customers in Port Townsend off Sims and Sheridan Street to lose power. Both outages now appear to have been resolved.

Important information for commuters taking the Edmonds/Kingston ferry: Work has begun on a Kitsap County ferry traffic lane project. Crews are installing a stoplight system at Lindvog Road Northeast and State Route 104 that detects when there is space for vehicles in the ferry line to proceed forward. Kiosks are also being added that will dispense boarding passes to help manage ferry traffic. From 8am to 6pm Tuesdays through Fridays,

expect alternating one-way traffic in this area. There will also be occasional full traffic stops in both directions approaching the work zone. Crews are scheduled to wrap up by winter.

And finally, nearly 85,000 bags of frozen shrimp sold at Kroger, QFC, Fred Meyer, and affiliated grocery chains have been recalled due to concerns over potential contamination with Cesium-137, a radioactive material that can increase the risk of cancer with long-term exposure. AquaStar (USA) Corp., based in Seattle, issued the voluntary recall last Friday after the Food and Drug Administration flagged three shrimp products that may have been prepared or stored under conditions that could allow for contamination. No illnesses have been reported. Customers are advised not to eat the shrimp and to return the product for a full refund. Questions can be directed to AquaStar at 1-800-331-3440, Monday through Friday, 8am to 5pm.

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.