

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker, with your local news and commentary for Tuesday, October 14, 2025, the 14th day of the federal government shutdown.

The Washington State *Standard* reports that one effect of the shutdown has been to force Medicare patients out of Telehealth and Hospital at Home programs. Telehealth and home hospital services can be a lifeline for older people, especially in rural areas, where residents may struggle to travel long distances for in-person health care. As of last fall, 366 hospitals across the country served 31,000 patients through the hospital-at-home program, which allows patients who would otherwise be hospitalized to get inpatient care at home with a combination of nurse visits, monitoring equipment and remote doctor visits. Telehealth consults, which originated during the pandemic, were used by more than 4 million Medicare beneficiaries in the first half of this year. Both programs expired October 1, and the shutdown has prevented Congress from extending them.

Washington Congresswoman Emily Randall was on hand this past weekend as part of the opening ceremony for East Jefferson Fire Rescue's Fire Rescue Fest. In an Instagram post about the event, Randall said that first responders like East Jefferson Fire Rescue and the fire crews who battle wildfires like Bear Gulch and Tunnel Creek continue to inspire her as she fights against the cuts to FEMA and Medicare, against immigration raids at emergency response sites, and fights to protect health care for all our citizens. While in town, Randall also toured Jefferson County PUD to learn about their ongoing fiber optic buildout and the critical role reliable internet access plays in education, small business growth, and quality of life for rural residents.

According to the *Peninsula Daily News*, one Port Townsend juvenile has been sent to Clallam County's Youth Center and two juvenile males have been placed in their parents' custody after stealing a truck, instigating a high-speed car chase, and causing three crashes on Thursday. A Hastings Road resident in Port Townsend reported on Wednesday that his vehicle, a 1993 Nissan Truck, had been stolen from his driveway. At around 2:30 Thursday afternoon, the owner of the truck contacted Jefferson County dispatch to say he had seen the vehicle near the Salish Coast Elementary School in Port Townsend.

Police deputies located the vehicle at Discovery Road and Sherman Street, but when they attempted to stop the vehicle, the driver took off at high speed. Deputies pursued the vehicle until eventually it came into the area of Flamingo Road. Two vehicles were struck at the Flamingo Road location, and another had been struck earlier in the Salish Coast parking lot as school was letting out. The occupants left the vehicle at Flamingo Road and took off running along the Larry Scott Trail. Using a perimeter search and a drone, the deputies located three juvenile males apparently fleeing the scene near the area of Reynolds Road and State Highway 20, and they were subsequently taken into custody. The case is still under investigation.

Jefferson County Public Health will be at the Quilcene WIC (women, infants, and children) Clinic on Highway 101 in Quilcene from 11am to 2pm tomorrow to offer free winter coats for children from infancy to youth sizes 14 and 16 while supplies last.

And finally, the Jefferson County Department of Emergency Management has announced that this coming Thursday at around 10:16am, the international Great Shakeout will happen, and all tsunami sirens on the Washington coast will be tested with the actual wailing sound. But do not call 911: This test is part of the annual Great Washington Shakeout earthquake and tsunami drill. NOAA Weather Radios will also sound an alarm and there will be a test of the Emergency Alert System on radio and television this year, but the Wireless Emergency Alert text system on cell phones will NOT be tested. Some local jurisdictions may test their opt-in alerting systems. The Department encourages all citizens, whether at home, at work, or at school to participate by doing a practice Drop, Cover and Hold On. They suggest staying in this position for at least 60 seconds in order to help develop muscle memory so that, in the event of an earthquake, you'll automatically know what to do to protect yourself.

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.