

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker, with your local news and commentary for Tuesday, October 28, 2025, the 28th day of the federal government shutdown.

Yesterday, in hopes of forcing Senate Democrats to approve House Republicans' stopgap government funding bill, President Trump's administration decreed that the USDA will not be permitted to use its contingency resources to fund critical food assistance benefits through the SNAP program. According to the Washington State *Standard*, the Department of Agriculture has confirmed that it will not tap into its multi-year contingency fund to cover food assistance for November. In addition, the USDA has pinned a message to its website blaming Senate Democrats for the shutdown, saying, "They can continue to hold out for healthcare for illegal aliens and gender mutilation procedures or reopen the government so mothers, babies, and the most vulnerable among us can receive critical nutrition assistance."

In related news, the *Standard* also notes that thousands of preschoolers across the country could lose access to Head Start if the shutdown continues. Unless a deal is reached to end the ongoing funding lapse, more than 65,000 children in 140 Head Start programs across the country will not get their federal grant funding come November 1, according to the National Head Start Association.

Jefferson County has announced that Jeremy Williammee has been named Community Development Director, and will start in that position on December 1. Williammee holds a master's degree in Public Administration and International Affairs, and has served as a Foreign Service Officer and diplomat with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), leading governance, transparency, and community development programs in Latin America, Central Asia, and other regions.

For those concerned about the impending closing of the homeless encampment at Evans Vista, Jefferson County Superior Court Judge Brandon Mack has placed a temporary restraining order on the city preventing the closure. In the meantime, our local housing task force has created a draft 5-year local homeless and affordable housing plan for the City and County. The Board is soliciting public input on the draft and will make a recommendation to the City of Port Townsend and the Jefferson County Board of Commissioners. You can read the draft plan online at <https://test.co.jefferson.wa.us/.../doc/10212589/Page1.aspx> and you can voice your opinions at any of three upcoming meetings:

- The Housing Fund Board, tomorrow, October 29, at 2:30pm
- The County Commissioners, November 3 at 9am
- or a joint City/County hearing on December 8.

Email questions or comments to carolyn@co.jefferson.wa.us.

And finally, just a reminder: if you own property in Jefferson County, the second half of your property taxes is due this Friday, October 31. Payments must be postmarked, dropped off or made online by Halloween to avoid late fees and interest charges. For mailed payments, residents should include their tax statement coupon or write their property tax account number on the check. Those who wish to have a receipt provided should include an email address for a digital copy or a self-addressed stamped envelope for mail.

Drop boxes for check payments are available through October 31, with locations at the rear parking lot of the Jefferson County Courthouse, the Port Townsend and Port Hadlock branches of 1st Security Bank of Washington, and Sound Community Bank in Port Ludlow. Payments can also be made in person at the Treasurer's Office in the courthouse, open Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm. Property owners behind on taxes can seek housing counseling or legal assistance through the statewide homeownership hotline at 1-877-894-HOME (4663). Senior citizens and disabled homeowners may qualify for a property tax exemption on their primary residence. To be eligible, applicants must be 61 or older by December 31 or fully disabled, with a household income of \$45,000 or less. More information about payments, exemptions, appeals and foreclosure assistance is available at the Jefferson County's assessor's website (<https://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/151/Assessor>).

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.