

This is KPTZ FM 91.9 in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Nhatt Nichols, bringing you news and commentary from the Jefferson County *Beacon* for Wednesday, November 19, 2025.

The *Beacon*'s Scott France reports that in 2024, 2,700 family units accessed the services of at least one of the four food bank sites operated by the Jefferson County Food Bank Association. Currently, there are 3,400 family units accessing Food Bank services. One of the most appreciated aspects of the food distributed by the local food banks is its ability to supply fresh produce. A downside is that when we move past the late summer/early fall harvest season for most produce, a shortfall can occur. This need, recognized 40 years ago, prompted local churches to form an effort to gather food and cash donations from area residents to help the food-insecure through the winter.

The WAVE Food Drive – which stands for What a Valuable Experience – began in 1985 when Ernie Carbaugh, a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Port Townsend, and Pastor Ray Smith decided to help the food bank with a community food drive in October. The Jefferson County Ministerial Association thought it was a great idea, and its members divided Port Townsend into sections with each faith community taking a section and canvassing the town with volunteers picking up food items at each house. The WAVE food drive has operated every October for the past 40 years. Last month, the drive received 575 pounds of food and a record \$44,000 in donations. Those donations are supplying the Jefferson County food banks to keep shelves full for clients throughout the winter.

Last year, Port Townsend First Presbyterian Church took over the coordination of WAVE from the First Baptist Church in Port Townsend. Working with Patricia Hennessy, who was the director of the Jefferson County Food Bank Association at the time, they worked to promote WAVE out to East Jefferson County. To complement the recently completed WAVE food drive, the food bank association are launching a new initiative in January called the Full Pantry Project to help support hungry families throughout the year. For more information, email info@jcfba.org with the subject line: FULL PANTRY PROJECT.

Now we turn to reporting by Angela Downs on the decision by the Port of Port Townsend to increase cruise ship docking rates. After a proposed increase in cruise line traffic caused some public concern, the port commission voted to increase the fee for a cruise ship docking at Union Wharf to \$2,000 starting January 1. They also decided to limit dockings to 40 per year. The Port inherited cruise ship traffic when it took over the City Pier and Union Wharf as part of a 2012 litigation settlement agreement with the City of Port Townsend. American Cruise Lines (ACL) is the largest American-based cruise ship operator and a private company. They have been the primary company docking at Union Wharf since 2013 and are charged the Port's docking rate per night. Between April and August, they reserve a space and, in the past, pay the Port \$1,200 per night. In the five busiest months in 2025, they paid over \$31,000 to tie up at Union Wharf.

With the new rates, Port Executive director Eron Berg expects ACL to pay around \$80,000 next year. The decision to increase rates and not expand cruise ship use came after surveys from PT Main Street and a privately conducted informal survey were shared at the Port Commission's November 12 meeting. According to the PT Mainstreet survey, 40% said they supported the increased number of small cruises, 32% said they did not support it, and 27% said they needed more information. 44% of downtown merchant respondents also said they have seen no increase in revenue when the cruise ships are in port. Many who supported the increase in cruise ship traffic felt it was a good way to attract non-driving visitors and felt it strengthened Port Townsend's identity as a tourist destination. They felt it was an opportunity for ACL passengers to return on their own and generate lodging tax and sales tax benefits.

Around 35% of the commenters expressed opposition to expanding port calls over concerns of environmental risks, the visual impact of a boat sitting on the wharf, and overcrowding of businesses. Common concerns were that Port Townsend lacks the infrastructure to handle more passengers. Repeated comments called for transparency between ACL, the Port, and residents. Skeptics questioned the positive economic impacts, given that food and lodging is provided on the ship.

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon and 5 Tuesday through Thursday, partnering on Wednesday to bring you stories from jeffcobeacon.com. You can submit ideas to the *Beacon* through info@jeffcobeacon.com. This is Nhatt Nichols. Thanks for listening.