

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker, with your local news and commentary for Tuesday, December 30, 2025.

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If you're one of the 375 PUD customers who lost water yesterday, the culprit was a car that struck a hydrant on Swanson Road off Cape George Road yesterday morning. Fortunately, Jefferson County PUD was on the job, and water service was restored by yesterday afternoon. If your water is slightly discolored or you have air in the lines, please flush your tap until it clears. If discoloring persists after 24 hours, call PUD's customer service at 360-385-5800.

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Jefferson County Commissioners have announced that the county will be collecting a new tax for public safety enhancement starting in April. According to the *Peninsula Daily News*, the one-tenth of 1 percent sales tax, which will only be collected in unincorporated Jefferson County, was made possible by state legislation adopted during the 2025 session and is expected to bring in \$301,596 in revenue in 2026. Funds must be used for domestic violence services, public defense services, diversion programs like our therapeutic courts, re-entry work for inmates, and local government programs that help with reducing homelessness and improving behavioral health.

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Chemakum tribal elder Rosalie Walz and Empty Bowl Press of Chimacum, copublished by John Pierce and Holly Hughes, have received awards from Humanities Washington for their outstanding contributions to the public humanities. Chimacum resident Anne Murphy, former executive director of the Port Townsend Marine Science Center, nominated Walz, citing the tribal elder's 2022 book, "Still Here: Portraits of the Chemakum" due to "the trauma it uncovers and the sensitivity required to nurture and usher this tough, small tribe forward." Murphy credited Walz with not only "opening avenues of reconciliation with tribes with whom the Chemakum formerly had tension" but also writing a history of the Chemakum people and working on signage for a trail the Chemakum historically used to travel from one village to another.

Empty Bowl Press was recommended for the honor by Port Townsend's Bill Porter, who translates Chinese texts under the pen name of "Red Pine." Porter described the press as a haven for like-minded "tree-planting poet friends." The press, which celebrates its 50th anniversary next year, has produced and distributed print publications, including journals and books, in a range of genres, including nonfiction, poetry, fiction, and documentary photography. Since 2020, Empty Bowl has also published a multi-genre journal, "The Madrona Project," on which Hughes previously served as an editor.

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Winners have been announced for the 31st Annual Uptown Gingerbread Contest at the Port Townsend Library. "Santa's Lighthouse" by Janice Riley and Mark Lung, won the title of Most Creative, and "Moominhouse" by Camilla Costa Veitenhans and Mikah Costa Goetz won Most Literary. The Children 12 & Under Award went to Murie Baker's "The Burrow," based on the Harry Potter series. And the People's Choice award, went to "Santa's Sea Sled" by Syd and Jaime Jaynes, with honorable mentions for the amazing pier construction for the PTMSC and the craftsmanship, decoration, and construction of the Port Townsend Victorian. The entries will remain on display at the library through tomorrow.

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As colder weather sets in, Jefferson County PUD reminds us to install hose covers and insulate any exposed pipes. And if you plan to leave home for several days in freezing weather, leave the heat on to at least 50 degrees, let cold water drip from faucets, open cabinet doors to expose pipes, disconnect and drain outdoor hoses and faucets, and know your main water shutoff valve's location in case of emergencies.

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And finally, tomorrow is New Year's Eve and time for Port Townsend's annual First Night celebration. This year's theme, Extraterrestrial Extravaganza, offers live music, circus arts, stargazing, interactive art, history-and-art exhibits, fireworks, and more. There will be no parking on Madison Street between Water and Washington from 6am to 9pm tomorrow. Madison Street between Water and Washington will be closed from 9am to 9pm, and the entire block around City Hall will be closed from 5:45 to 8 pm for the Lantern Parade and Fireworks show. Please abide by all parking restrictions and road closures, be sure to plan for a designated driver, and watch out for pedestrians.

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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.