

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker, with your local news and commentary for Thursday, January 15, 2026.

City staff members presented an update on street plans at this week's Port Townsend City Council meeting. Planned work for the 8.5 miles of city streets they'll address this year includes chip sealing, drainage improvements, shoulder work, hot spot repairs, and preparations for future street projects. Luckily the city's public works department has secured a second Transportation Improvement Board grant, plus they are working in partnership with Jefferson County's Public Works Department. That partnership turns out to be a win for both parties: the city can access the County's chip sealing equipment and expertise and, with the County's chip sealing program shrinking, they need the city's work to make the program big enough to support the equipment. According to the *Peninsula Daily News*, streets are prioritized based on preservation value, traffic volume, drainage conditions, and an overriding goal of reducing long-term maintenance burdens. Public Works Director Steve King has acknowledged that some significant problem streets remain unaddressed, but that those will be more difficult and expensive to repair.

In related news, starting this coming Monday, January 19, the city will be doing work on Mill Road, which will be closed from January 19 to 23. Detour access past the Mill is available via South 8th Street and Thomas Street. Work includes excavation and paving in the area. Once that work is completed, they will tackle South Discovery Road, and the section from South Jacob Miller Road to just beyond the Mill Road intersection will be closed from January 26 to February 6 for drainage, roadway improvements, and paving.

On Tuesday of this week, the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, together with the Port Townsend Police Department, Washington State Patrol, and East Jefferson Fire-Rescue, came together to celebrate Josephine Norwood on her amazing 104th birthday! Josephine and her family were treated to a special emergency vehicle procession followed by beautiful flowers and lots of smiles. From all of them and from all of us at KPTZ Radio, Happy 104th Birthday, Josephine!

The Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has a Surplus Engine Program, which takes retired wildfire engines from the state fleet and distributes them to rural fire districts at no cost. Last week, thanks to that DNR program, a new wildland fire engine rolled into Quilcene Fire Rescue Station 21, a new addition to the fleet that officials say could make the difference between a brush fire and a major emergency. Quilcene was one of 25 recipients of the used engines and was chosen in part because of its location in the heavily forested corridor between Hood Canal and the Olympic Mountain Range, according to the *Port Townsend Leader*. The new engine is not replacing an existing rig; it's an addition: having the extra vessel could be crucial, as minutes can mean the difference between a small fire and a disaster.

Tucked between the shores of Hood Canal and the Dosewallips River, the Brinnon School serves 68 south county students from kindergarten through 8th grade and has been named a 2025 State Distinguished School by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The Distinguished School designation is based on student performance and growth on tests, and schools must meet a strict participation rate even to be considered. But

the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction also considers student poverty levels, and about 80% of Brinnon students qualify for free or reduced-price meals, well above the 40% the state looks at when recognizing schools.

The school has also landed a \$5.655 million Small Rural Schools Modernization Grant for major campus upgrades scheduled to begin this summer. The grant will fund a new Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) system, plumbing, and septic, as well as fully renovated Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant restrooms.

And finally, a reminder to dog and cat owners: the next 4 to 6 weeks is mating season for coyotes, when they become more active, vocal, and territorial as they search for mates. Coyotes are always a danger to pets, but male coyotes can become particularly aggressive this time of year. That risk will be higher from now through early March, so don't let your animals out unattended.

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.