

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker, with your local news and commentary for Thursday, March 5, 2026.

Highway 104 was closed in both directions for several hours Tuesday evening after a head-on traffic collision near milepost 9 in Port Ludlow. Pelilu Wines, 17, of Poulsbo, was driving a 2018 Honda CRV westbound on Highway 104 a little before 7pm when she crossed into oncoming traffic and struck a Jefferson Transit bus head-on. The bus then crossed the center line and struck a 2008 Toyota pickup which had been following closely behind the Honda. Wines died at the scene, and the bus driver, Michael Berrett, 62, of Port Townsend, was airlifted to Harborview Medical Center in Seattle. Christopher and Elizabeth Fiorini of Sequim, who were in the pickup, were both injured and were transported to Jefferson Healthcare. It is not known if drugs or alcohol were involved, according to the *Peninsula Daily News*.

Last Friday evening a resident who lives in the 200 block of Aerie Lane reported a leak in the city of Port Townsend's Olympic Gravity Water System. The leak was caused by a failed weld between two sections of the water pipe. Last year a similar break happened nearby in the same neighborhood. The pipe, which also serves the Port Townsend Paper Corporation, needed to be repaired quickly to prohibit the leak from growing worse, so a city water crew worked through the evening with the help of contractors from Seton Construction to affix a repair band over the failed weld. The cost of the repair, according to *Peninsula Daily News*, was \$60,000, to be appropriated from the water sewer fund.

Unfortunately, the repair band is only a temporary fix, but it is hoped it will hold until the November shutdown of the paper mill, at which time the pipe can be drained and rewelded. In the meantime, the city plans to monitor the site daily.

The *Leader* reports that Jefferson County will receive roughly \$7.3 million to connect internet service to 1,205 rural homes and businesses, thus completing the county's long-planned rural fiber network. By the end of 2027, the PUD expects to have connected nearly 4,000 rural homes and businesses with over 500 miles of cable. The funding, which comes through the federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program, is tied to specific addresses identified in federal broadband maps as "last-mile connections," which extend fiber internet down rural roads and directly into homes that were previously outside grant boundaries.

While the majority of Jefferson County's awarded addresses received fiber access, some homes were still excluded from the PUD's proposal due to the expected cost to reach them. For those areas excluded from that fiber build, secondary funding was awarded to SpaceX to serve 293 addresses using low-earth-orbit satellite technology. According to the PUD, the fiber network under construction can deliver up to 10 gigabits per second. Current rates start at \$65 a month, with a \$30 low-income rate available.

The Jefferson Land Trust (JLT) has been awarded a \$2 million grant from the Camila Chandler Family Foundation to continue its work in protecting the Quimper Wildlife Corridor. The 3.5-mile corridor stretching from Fort Worden to McCurdy Point connects a string of wetlands, forests and floodplains providing habitat for more than 200 bird species, amphibians, and mammals. It's also home to part of the popular Cappy's Trails network. According to the *Leader*, the \$2 million will support the Land Trust's next wave of property

acquisitions, fund stewardship needs and a new staff position for its conservation team, and leverage other public funding sources.

And finally, this weekend marks the annual Jefferson County Home Builders Association Home Show in Port Townsend. Open from 9 to 4 on Saturday at the Blue Heron Middle School, the show will feature more than 60 booths that will showcase builders, bankers, insurance companies, contractors, public agencies, and nonprofits who will present information related to home improvement, home purchasing, and construction. The show also will feature presentations on solar power, wildfire protection, regenerative growing and more. For more information, visit www.jeffcohomebuilders.com.

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.