

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker, with your local news and commentary for Tuesday, April 28, 2026.

Having already blocked grocery giant Albertson's attempted merger with Kroger, Washington State has now launched a suit against Albertsons, alleging after a monthslong investigation that the firm has been overcharging customers for years through fraudulent buy one, get one free or BOGO offers. According to the Washington State *Standard*, Attorney General Nick Brown claims Albertsons, which also runs Safeway stores and has 225 stores in Washington, overcharged customers on at least 3.1 million BOGO transactions between October 2019 and May 2024, bringing in at least \$19.6 million by artificially raising the prices of items prior to a BOGO offer and then lowering the prices again following the promotions.

Albertsons has stated that the claims are false and based on flawed analysis and data errors. But this isn't the first time the firm has been challenged: in 2016 they paid \$107 million to settle a class-action lawsuit in Oregon over similar allegations, and they settled again in 2024 when Washington consumers brought their own lawsuit against the company. The terms of that settlement have not been disclosed.

The *Leader* tells us the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe is seeking to transfer the Dungeness and Protection Island national wildlife refuges from federal ownership into tribal trust. The Dungeness Refuge sees thousands of visitors each year, but Protection Island, home to sensitive seabirds and marine mammals, is closed to the public. The transfer proposal follows a 2024 co-management agreement between the Tribe and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in which the Tribe plays a leading role in day-to-day operations at the two sites.

But more than 1,500 petitioners object to the idea. Concerned about public access and conservation priorities, some worry that the tribe might build a harbor, a casino, and a hotel on Protection Island, while others have expressed concerns that the tribe might expand their existing commercial oyster farming onto the Dungeness Spit. Marty Bluewater, however, Protection Island's sole resident and caretaker, supports the transfer, believing the tribe will enhance recreational and educational opportunities for the public while both protecting the wildlife and honoring indigenous history and culture.

Facing a multibillion dollar shortfall at the state level, Governor Ferguson's 2026 budget includes significant education-related cuts, especially to early learning and K-12 programs. As a result, the Port Townsend and Chimacum school districts foresee severe budget and staffing cuts. According to the *Leader*, the Port Townsend School District is facing \$490,000 in budget cuts and the Chimacum School District will have to cut \$500,000 from its budget.

Port Townsend District Superintendent Linda Rosenbury believes she'll need to cut two full time staffers, while Chimacum District Superintendent Scott Mauk estimates he may need to lose up to 5 and a half full time equivalent personnel.

The largest single cut for Port Townsend is \$180,000 from its State Learning Assistance Program funding, resulting in staff reductions at Blue Heron Middle school and the discontinuation of its February Intersession program, which offers parents a childcare option during break. Port Townsend's outdoor learning dollars, used for overnight environmental education trips, will see a \$90,000 reduction, but Rosenbury says the district is working with families to come up with fundraising possibilities.

Brinnon Firefighter Justin Matheson has been selected as Washington's Firefighter of the Year by the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Nominated by Quilcene Brinnon VFW Post 3213 and selected for this statewide honor by the VFW Department of Washington, Matheson will be formally recognized for his dedication, professionalism, and service to the Brinnon community at the VFW Department of Washington Convention Banquet in Wenatchee this June.

And finally, Jefferson County PUD will hold a Community Currents gathering at the Quilcene Community Center this coming Thursday, April 30, from 2:30 to 4:30pm. If you have any questions about billing; if you want to know if and when you might get connected to their fiber broadband service; if you're wondering if PUD water is available in your area; or if you have energy efficiency questions or concerns, bring them to this meeting and PUD will help sort them out.

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.