This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I’m Charlie Bermant, with news and commentary for Tuesday. April 28, 2020.

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As of this morning, Jefferson County Public Health currently reports 28 confirmed COVID-19 cases in our county, with no new cases reported since April 10. Of the 790 tested to date, 759, or 97 percent tested negative, while three percent tested positive. Three people are now awaiting test results. These numbers reflect the shortages in availability of COVID-19 screening and represent less than 1% of our population tested for Covid19 although the shortages will decrease, according to Jefferson County health officer Dr. Thomas Locke.

During his regular weekly briefing in front of the Jefferson County Commissioners, Locke expressed the hope to test everyone with any sign of infection. He discussed new CDC criteria for symptoms, in addition to fever, cough and shortness of breath, The new criteria include: chills, shaking, repeated shaking with chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, and loss of sense and smell.

Currently, when someone tests positive, a nine-person investigative team tracks down all those coming into contact with the infected person. All the contacts enter into a two week quarantine, a process that Locke credits with keeping county numbers low.

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Over the weekend, Port Townsend business Good Man Sanitation installed a porta-potty and a hand washing station where the Larry Scott Trail crosses Thomas Street. It’s not for the hikers, but meant to provide the local homeless population with a hygiene option.

The company, which includes several homeless advocates, developed the idea with the belief that no one should be denied proper hygiene. The trail location was chosen as it is adjacent to woods that are frequented by the local homeless population. Also at the idea stage is the installation of a shower trailer.

Good Man installed the hygiene station on its own, without requesting permission from the city or the county. They saw a need and filled it without involving bureaucracy.

The company will regularly service the trail facility, which would cost a regular customer $250 a month to maintain.

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The Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce is providing several services to help the public through the COVID-19 health emergency. As we reported last week, the chamber has published a list of more than 50 local restaurants that are now open for takeout businesses. (See https://www.jeffcountychamber.org/food-service-options.) The list, which you can print out and put on the refrigerator, classifies the restaurants by type; including phone numbers, hours of operation and whether it is a takeout or curbside delivery operation.

The Chamber is also offering a list of active wi-fi connections (https://www.jeffcountychamber.org/news-release), where people can park and access high speed Internet if they don’t have a good home connection. There is also a list of local businesses that offer online shopping and gift card options (https://www.jeffcountychamber.org/online-shopping-gift-cards). One way to support businesses during this dead period is to buy a gift card for later use, in order to help the business’s cash flow.
Chamber Executive Director Arlene Allen told KPTZ that these directories will be updated regularly to reflect the latest news. For instance, after Thursday Aldrich’s Market will close, decreasing the town’s food options. Allen said that the directory listings include all local businesses, regardless of Chamber membership.

The Chamber will also offer support to businesses – members, or not – in navigating their anticipated reopening. Allen predicts that many habits acquired during the pandemic such as virtual meetings and increased hygiene, will continue at that time.

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KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon Monday through Saturday and at five PM Monday through Thursday. You can contact us through news at kptz.org.

This is Charlie Bermant with some of today’s news. Thank you for listening.