

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant, with news and commentary for Tuesday, May 26, 2020.

\*\*\*

Jefferson County has begun its Phase 2 reopening, implementing guidelines for specific business and recreational activities.

The lead items are voluntary, and don't differ from what we've heard for months: Stay at least six feet away from others while outside the home, and wear a cloth mask while in public. And all businesses need to develop and comply with their own set of health and safety requirements.

Port Townsend continues to lose tourism dollars, but the new rules still discourage visitors. Camping is not yet allowed, although all outdoor recreation with fewer than five people outside of your household is allowed. Five is also the magic number for private events, if you have a party don't invite more than five others.

Manufacturing, construction and service businesses are now allowed. Groomers – of pets and people – can serve their existing customers, although barbershop conversations will change. While there are general rules, you can expect that each business will have its own guidelines. So when you enter a business pretend that you are a guest in someone else's home.

Travel outside of the proximity of your own home is discouraged. Sit-down restaurant service and retail won't be allowed until our neighboring counties, Kitsap and Clallam, themselves implement Phase 2.

Corresponding with the Phase 2 reopening, COVID-19 numbers remain stable. The Jefferson County Board of Health website still lists a total of 30 reported instances of COVID-19. Currently 1,381 people have been tested, with 1,342 – or 98.2% – percent testing negative. Nine people are awaiting test results.

\*\*\*

Drive-In movies are specifically allowed, which opens the door for the Wheel In Motor Movie, one of the few such businesses in the state to reopen and, specifically, to host local high school graduations. Port Townsend's graduation takes place on June 12, after a serpentine parade through downtown where seniors can take a bow.

In a newsletter, High School Principal Carrie Erhardt said that while the district is unable to give the seniors the graduation they deserve, they have worked to create a fun program to result in a memorable experience.

After the parade, the seniors will assemble at the drive in, with a limit of one car per graduate. This changes things around, as each senior will sit with their family during the ceremony.

School staff and board members will also attend. All adults working the event will wear gloves and face masks, in school colors.

Seniors will be able to preserve the moment through a specially prepared commemorative video, viewable on the school's website at 8 pm on graduation day.

\*\*\*

Amid COVID-19, regular regional health hazards persist. The Jefferson County Board of Health reports that shellfish samples from Discovery Bay have been found to contain elevated levels of marine biotoxins that cause

Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP). As a result, the Washington State Department of Health has closed Discovery Bay beaches for shellfish harvest.

Danger signs have been posted at public access points warning people not to consume shellfish from this area. Due to the Governor's Stay Home, Stay Healthy order, recreational shellfish harvest is not allowed on public tidelands at this time. And property owners with private tidelands on Discovery Bay are advised to heed this biotoxin warning.

Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning can be fatal. Illness is caused by eating shellfish contaminated with toxins from the naturally occurring marine algae. Symptoms of PSP can appear within minutes or hours and usually begin with tingling lips and tongue, moving to the hands and feet, followed by difficulty breathing, and paralysis. Anyone experiencing any of these symptoms after consuming shellfish should contact a health care provider immediately. For extreme reactions call 911.

For more information, visit the state Department of Health and Fish and Wildlife websites.

\*\*\*

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