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Jefferson County Public Health announced a fourth confirmed case of coronavirus in the county on March 17th. There are now more than 1,000 confirmed cases in the state, and more than 50 deaths.

The pandemic is also affecting local businesses. Hundreds of Jefferson County's restaurant workers woke up Monday morning without a job, alongside thousands of others across the state.

Governor Jay Inslee announced March 15 that all restaurants, bars, recreation and entertainment businesses will close for at least the next two weeks to dampen the spread of the coronavirus.

Kris Nelson, who owns four restaurants in Port Townsend, said it was "heartbreaking" as she had to lay off around 40 employees for the duration of the closure. Her restaurants will continue serving takeout and delivery meals.

Other business owners, such as Mike Howell, owner of Howell's Sandwich Company, are concerned they won't survive the financial hardship.

"Like many of my fellow business owners I'm devastated, mentally exhausted and in complete fear of what the future holds for us," Howell wrote on Facebook.

City council members urged the public to still order take-out in order to support businesses. Deputy Mayor David Faber called upon landlords to consider forgoing rent payments for commercial and residential rentals or at the very least lower rents to just cover mortgage costs so the burden is shared.

Port Townsend High School senior Wes Blue left school Monday afternoon not knowing when he would be back to finish out his last year before being thrust into adulthood.

Blue said he worries he's missing out on his last chance at the high school experience. But even though this is not the way he wanted it to go, he understands that people's health comes first.

Blue is one of many Jefferson County K-12 students wondering what the future holds after Gov. Jay Inslee announced last week that schools would close statewide for a minimum of six weeks to reduce the spread of COVID-19, the coronavirus. The closure will remain through at least April 24 but could be extended.

Forty percent of students across the state rely on schools for free breakfast and lunch. Port Townsend and Quilcene School districts are instituting free breakfast and lunch services for students, at locations around the county including at Port Townsend High School and Salish Coast Elementary.

Just a few hours before Governor Jay Inslee announced that all schools would be closed for the next six weeks, Blue Heron's seventh grade class was getting their hands dirty as they learned what it takes to be watershed conservationists. Sixty students took a field trip to Salmon Creek near Discovery Bay to plant native trees and shrubs along the creek in order to improve salmon habitat.

Local artist Clae Welch, who operates his tattoo business out of the historic Terry Building in downtown Port Townsend, is investing all the profits from his business into rehabilitating the building and restoring it to its former glory, with hotel rooms on the top floor, his tattoo studio on the main floor and a bar and live music venue in the basement where the Upstage Restaurant and Bistro once operated.

Welch, who owns the Terry Building, was the recipient of a \$40,000 loan from the City of Port Townsend to fix damage to the roof and parapet sustained in a windstorm that knocked the northwest corner corbel off the building.

The money will pay for scaffolding, brick and mortar work and a new parapet wall. The work is expected to take about a month to complete and will start later in the spring.

In the past 130 years, the building has been home to an electric company, a telephone company and a tailor shop on its main floor, a boarding house on its top floor and a Chinese laundry in its basement, according to the Jefferson County Historical Society.

Welch said he hopes to continue the building's tradition of being a boarding house by reopening the top floor to overnight stays with five small hotel rooms.

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