

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant, with local news and commentary for Thursday, July 30, 2020.

Jefferson County reported another case of COVID-19 this week, a woman in her seventies. This brings the county total to 51. as of Wednesday, 4,780 local residents have been tested with 4,678 testing negative. Fifty one people are awaiting results.

Jefferson County was this close to a phase three reopening last month, but that, along with other such actions, is postponed until further notice.

Governor Jay Inslee announced Tuesday he is suspending indefinitely the ability for counties to move to the next phase of reopening, the extension of a one month delay. This time, the order has no stated expiration. This means the economy – and local businesses – will be affected for an undetermined amount of time.

Jefferson County is currently in Phase 2 opening status. There are 16 other counties in Phase 2 including Clallam and Kitsap. Grays Harbor and Mason are in Phase 3.

The Washington State Department of Health reported that Coronavirus cases continue to rise in many counties. The age distribution of cases continues to spread from its recent concentration in young adults, with an increasing number of cases detected in older adults and children.

Deaths continue to rise in eastern Washington, and for the first time since March, are increasing in Western Washington, although there are no COVID-19 related deaths in Jefferson County. As of Wednesday, ten of the 51 reported cases have yet to recover from the virus.

Our local representative Derek Kilmer is supporting two bills to provide support to families who need childcare and support for childcare providers to enable the safe reopening of the economy. Kilmer co-sponsored the Child Care is Essential Act to create a fund that would invest in childcare and ensure providers across Washington have additional resources to safely reopen. The fund would administer a projected \$838 million to protect Washington state's childcare system – helping providers stay open, keeping employees on payroll, and ensuring childcare facilities are able to safely operate under new guidelines.

Additionally, the House passed the Child Care for Economic Recovery Act to provide ongoing federal investments and tax subsidies for working families, bringing quality childcare to more working families and providing new tax credits to support child care providers affected by the COVID-19 shutdowns.

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Here's a fun activity, if you get a little bored or restless. The Washington Invasive Species Council and the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) are asking the public to take a few minutes during the month of August to check trees in their communities for invasive insects.

August is the peak time of year that wood-boring insects are most often spotted outside of trees.

According to executive coordinator of the Washington Invasive Species Council Justin Bush, state and federal agencies do a fantastic job at preventing the introduction of invasive species to the United States, but occasionally some slip through. “When a new invasive species is introduced, we need to know as quickly as possible so we can stop its spread,” Bush said in a press release.

For more information you can check out the invasive species list on the agency’s website, <https://invasivespecies.wa.gov/>.

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon Monday through Saturday and at 5pm PM Monday through Thursday. You can contact us through news@kptz.org.

This is Charlie Bermant. Thank you for listening.