

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant, with commentary for Tuesday, September 3, 2020.

Jefferson County reported one new case of COVID-19 this week, bringing the total to 70. The new case is a man in his seventies. Fifty three people are now awaiting test results.

Jefferson County District 1 Commissioner Kate Dean was in the other Washington last week exploring college options for her 16-year-old son, coincidentally during the March on Washington For Jobs and Freedom. Along with her son and fiancé, Dean was one of several thousand attendees who braved 100 degree weather to demand an overhaul of the country's criminal justice system and push for racial equality.

The event occurred at the Lincoln Memorial, the same site where the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. called for those same reforms decades ago in his iconic "I Have a Dream" speech.

Dean said the initial mood was tense, as the Republican Convention had wrapped up the night before and there was a large police presence. It was ultimately peaceful, she said, with less rage than she expected. The speakers included the Rev. Al Sharpton, Martin Luther King III, and members of George Floyd's family. Hearing their grief expressed was a powerful experience for Dean, who also experienced an unfamiliar feeling for a white person from Washington. That is, being part of a minority.

Dean is unopposed in her bid for a second term, as she drew no challengers during the May filing period.

Officeholders are often forced to balance their regular duties with campaigning during an election year, but the current Jefferson County Commissioners are spared that conflict – even though two positions are on the ballot. Heidi Eisenhower and Lorna Smith are running for the District 2 seat, to replace retiring commissioner David Sullivan.

Dean said she is grateful that she does not have to spend the time campaigning that would detract from regular duties. This includes dealing with COVID-19, the economic downturn, and creating a major initiative to educate county employees about race. Although she is not campaigning, Dean said she is remaining accessible to the public and will address any group that asks. She wants to stay transparent and positive, and doesn't take her re-election for granted.

Two other county officials are unopposed in their re-election efforts: Superior Court Judge Keith Harper and Public Utility District commissioner Ken Collins.

The election, if you're keeping track, is 61 days away. The 18-day voting period, at which time ballots are mailed to voters, begins on October 17. Washingtonians have voted by mail for 15 years, but a controversy related to the Post Office has caused a challenge to mail-in balloting. In response, the Jefferson County Auditor has heard the concerns regarding timely mail delivery of ballots during the November Election and recommends that voters with such concerns submit their ballots at one of six drop off locations throughout the county.

The boxes open 20 days before the election, October 14, and are accessible 24/7 until they are locked at 8pm on November 3. For the specific locations go to the auditor's web page (<https://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/DocumentCenter/View/5284/All-5-Jefferson-County-Ballot-drop-box-locations?bidId=>)

Jefferson County is celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Moderate Risk Waste Collection Facility, a program of the Department of Public Works Solid Waste Division.

The department estimates that 30,000 customers have prevented 2.5 million pounds of pollution from reaching land, waterways and landfills during the life of the program, where residents and small businesses brought 140,000 pounds of recyclable material last year, including antifreeze, rechargeable batteries, fluorescent and other mercury-containing lights.

Included in the program totals are oil, antifreeze, rechargeable batteries, and mercury-containing lights collected at Jefferson County's Solid Waste Disposal Facility and Quilcene Disposal Site, as well as used oil collected at the Port Ludlow Marina. The additional sites are limited to five gallons per customer.

The MRW Collection Facility, located at 282 10th Street in the Port of Port Townsend's Boat Haven, is open every Friday and first Saturday of each month 10am to noon, and 12:30am to 4:30pm except County Holidays.

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

This is Charlie Bermant. Thank you for listening.