

(Local News) September 8, 2020: Air advisory, downtown fundraisers.

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant, with local news and commentary for Tuesday, September 8, 2020.

While there could be an uptick in COVID 19 cases after the Labor Day Weekend, the number of Jefferson County cases remains unchanged at 70. As of Monday, 15 people were awaiting test results.

The Jefferson County Department of Emergency Management has issued an advisory, stating that air quality in the Port Townsend area is now unhealthy for sensitive groups degraded due to wildfire smoke originating from Eastern Washington.

Weather reports are predicting above average temperatures, low relative humidity, lack of precipitation and strong winds. This accompanied with the ground level fuels, which have grown all summer and are now tinder dry, creates a high danger for sustained fire.

According to an online guide about particle pollution, this includes people with heart or lung disease, older adults, children and teenagers. It recommends that people in these categories reduce prolonged or heavy exertion. It's safe to go outside, but while participating in less intense activities. And watch for symptoms such as coughing or shortness of breath.

General advice is to stay inside with doors and windows closed in extreme cases. Refrain from smoking and vacuuming. Don't burn incense or use aerosol sprays. Reduce use of gas, propane or woodturning stoves. Refrain from chopping wood, mowing the lawn or going for a run.

Although it is not mentioned in these guidelines, maintaining proper masking protocol provides added protection.

Additionally, a county wide burn ban is now in effect, prohibiting all outdoor burning including recreational fires, fire pits and the use of charcoal briquettes within the county limits.

Both the burn ban and the air quality advisory are in effect until further notice.

Two Taylor Street businesses are sponsoring fundraising campaigns. The Rose Theatre, hit hard by the pandemic, launched a plea last week to raise money to sustain the business for six months as its physical space is closed. At the beginning of the campaign management stated that missing its goal would cause the theater to close forever. This doesn't seem likely right now, as of this morning it raised \$154,000 toward its \$160,000 goal.

Across the street, the Tin Brick is raising money to pay the medical expenses of manager Jason Boyette, who suffered a heart attack and three cardiac arrests last week. Boyette, who took over the restaurant earlier this year, is just 40 years old. The original goal was \$50,000 toward medical expenses

but Boyette's wife, Amanda Timentwa, scaled that down to \$10,000 because she didn't want to appear greedy. As of this morning the fundraiser has gathered about \$1,900 in contributions.

Boyette is currently in a medically induced coma at Harborview in Seattle. The restaurant is closed until further notice.

Both fundraisers are accessible on Facebook. You can bring contributions to the Rose directly or to the Coldwell Banker office above the Tin Brick in order to circumvent Facebook's percentage.

A new website is online with the purpose of keeping the community up-to-date with work being done by Jefferson County, the City of Port Townsend, the Port of Port Townsend and the Jefferson PUD to build a collaborative COVID-19 Resiliency and Recovery Plan.

The Intergovernmental Coordinating Committee (ICC) includes community groups and individual stakeholders representing Human Services, Food System Resiliency, Broadband, Culture & Events, Economy & Jobs, and Children & Families.

Beginning in June, representatives from each of the four government bodies have met with members of the community to draft a roadmap for helping Jefferson County recover from the effects of COVID-19. They are scheduled to consolidate the gathered information into a draft Recovery and Resiliency Plan due in December.

The website, www.jeffcotogether.net, provides informational links in three categories: COVID 19 screening, community groups and a Department of Health data dashboard that links to the latest statistics.

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 at kptz.org.

This is Charlie Bermant. Thanks for listening.