

Local News – October 6, 2020: Aldrich’s reopens, Census continues

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I’m Charlie Bermant, with local news and commentary for Tuesday, October 6, 2020.

After only one new case reported in September Jefferson County reported four recent instances of COVID-19 so far this month, three of them late on Monday.

The new cases were two men and one woman, with one case each in their 40s, 50s and 70s. The case reported late last week was a woman in her 20s.

According to a posting on the Department of Health’s Facebook page, one case had likely out-of-county exposure, one case had no such exposure, and one case’s exposure is unknown.

Fifty-six people are now awaiting test results. Our infection rate is .85 percent.

Here’s a KPTZ exclusive: After closing in April due to a business slowdown exacerbated by the pandemic, Aldrich’s Market in Uptown Port Townsend will open for business this Saturday, Oct. 10.

Yos Ligtenberg, one of three siblings who now own and operate the market, told KPTZ that the interior has changed to reflect pandemic practices and social distancing. It will have a wide open feel, with cash registers off to the side. Most of the items offered in the past will still be available, while many of the food offerings will lean toward the ethnic and organic, according to Ligtenberg.

Food service itself has changed. There will be no special orders, rather both the kitchen and the sushi bar will prepare a variety of grab and go items. Tamako Tolson, who has operated on the second floor since First Federal Bank moved out of the upstairs space ten years ago, will have a new location, front and center downstairs. And the kitchen is managed by Grace Love, who does some singing on the side.

The upstairs will be reconfigured into what Ligtenberg calls “a community living room” where people can gather, but that will not be fully realized until social distancing rules are relaxed. He expects the store will become an iconic Port Townsend spot, although not necessarily one frequented by tourists.

Also new is a knife sharpening store upstairs, managed by returning Port Townsend native Sam Rezendes.

The new Aldrich's will employ 31 people, many of them previous employees.

The store will open at 8 am this Saturday, from then on, the hours will be 7 am to 9 am, seven days a week.

After some deadline uncertainty, Census workers will now continue Census data collection through Saturday, October 31 and reinstate the revised deadline of April 30, 2021 for delivery of reapportionment data to the president, whomever that may be.

The original pandemic-imposed deadline was October 31, which was shortened one month by Federal decree. A judge's ruling last week restored the original deadline.

According to LOCAL Census 2020 Project Director Jeannie McMacken, Jefferson County will continue to monitor events and will work with our Area Census Office to plan more Census Pop-ups and determine what enumerator work still needs to be continued.

As you may have heard, responding to the census determines the level of Federal funding allocated to the reporting region. So, a non-response essentially takes money away from government services.

Currently, the Census Bureau reports that non-response follow-up for the Olympia Area Census Office is 99 percent complete. Washington State ranks second overall in the country with 72.1 percent self-response.

Port Townsend's response rate is 76.4 percent, higher than both the 66.1 percent for the rest of the county and the 72.1 statewide percentage. Those who have yet to respond can circumvent visit 2020census.gov, call 844-330-2020, or return the paper questionnaire that has arrived through the US Mail.

And finally, Election Day is just 28 days away, or four weeks. County residents can vote as early as October 15, the earliest day in which ballots could arrive by mail. Those who are not yet registered or want to change their registration have until October 26, eight days before the election to register online or by mail, or they can register in person up to 8 pm on November 3, when the polls close. Early voting is encouraged by, well, just about everybody.

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. Thank you for listening.