

Local News – November 5, 2020: Elections and COVID. What else?

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant, with local news and commentary for Thursday, November 5, 2020.

The Election is over, with Jefferson County recording a 90 percent ballot response, of the approximately 27,000 ballots sent to voters.

As of Wednesday at 4 p.m., there were 2,563 ballots left to count and validate. Auditor Rose Ann Carroll said having ballots dropped off early in the voting process was very helpful for the staff. She said that Election Day was quite busy with a stream of people coming in for replacement ballots and to register. Ballot boxes were collected. Carroll herself drove out to the west end to pick up ballots from the two tribal locations last night. And at 8 p.m. On election day, the office had three people here registering and replacing ballots.

The next count update will come on Friday at 4 p.m with the election to be certified on November 24.

As expected, Jefferson County heavily favored former Vice President Joe Biden over incumbent President Donald Trump, 72.81 percent over 25.28 percent. Biden also carried Washington but only earned a 60 percent vote total. In the governor's race Jefferson County favored incumbent Jay Inslee over challenger Loren Culp, 72 percent to 27 percent, despite the best efforts of the guy in the big red truck. Initial statewide results show Inslee with 59.6% to Culp's 40.1%.

Our incumbent legislative delegation was re-elected, with State Senator Kevin Van De Wege and Representatives Steve Tharinger and Mike Chapman all earning new terms.

As for the Jefferson County Board of Commissioners, Heidi Eisenhour handily defeated Lorna Smith, 57 percent to 39 percent in the race to succeed four term Commissioner David Sullivan, who is retiring. District 1 Commissioner Kate Dean also earned another term, by acclimation. While a few women have served as commissioners, this is the first time they will have a majority 2/3 gender advantage. Although we don't expect this to be an issue.

United States Representative Derek Kilmer won a fifth term on Tuesday. Kilmer, who represents Jefferson, Clallam, Gray's Harbor, Kitsap and parts of Pierce County is hoping that government will adopt a more unified approach than in the contentious past few years. He would like to see government directly address COVID 19 and its subsequent economic fallout and hopes the Senate will approve a stimulus package approved by the House some time ago. As a Democrat, he hopes Vice President Joe Biden takes over the presidency from Donald Trump. Kilmer called into KPTZ and addressed these issues live on the air during our elections return special yesterday. You can hear a rebroadcast of that interview at 5:15 pm today, here on KPTZ.

COVID-19 cases are trickling in, with one new case reported on Wednesday, a mid county female in her 40s. The last four cases have originated from the mid county area. Forty-six people are awaiting results and our positive ratio remains at .83 percent. Since the beginning of the pandemic the county has recorded 10,778 negative results.

The Department of Commerce's Eviction Rent Assistance Program (ERAP), funded with federal CARES Act dollars, may prevent evictions by paying past due and current/future rent for people in distress due to COVID-19.

Rental assistance is provided through OlyCAP in Jefferson County. For more information call 360-385-2571 and select option 2 f or go to www.olycap.org and click on "ask for housing assistance.

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.