

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Lily Haight with local news for December 23, 2020.

The number of coronavirus cases in Jefferson County holds steady at 207, after the Public Health department reported 5 new cases so far this week. There are currently 41 test results still pending. After receiving a shipment of 974 doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, Jefferson Healthcare has begun to distribute the first doses to first responders. East Jefferson Fire Rescue posted on social media last weekend that members of EJFR, including Fire Chief Black, were able to get their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. The post noted that the process was quick and easy, and no adverse effects were reported. This is part of the Phase 1a of vaccination in Jefferson County, which prioritizes those at highest risk of exposure including healthcare workers, first responders, and long-term care facilities. While the vaccine is crucial to beat the virus, Jefferson County Public Health also advises that citizens must continue to wear masks, social distance and maintain good hygiene, even as more and more people get vaccinated.

We report the latest numbers here on KPTZ News during our regular broadcasts, but cases are increasing on a daily basis. For the latest numbers, including gender breakdown and cumulative percentages, visit the Jefferson County Public Health website (<https://jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/1466/Case-Information>) or the Jefferson County Government Facebook page.

Governor Jay Inslee announced new restrictions Monday amid reports of a new strain of the COVID-19 virus. According to the new restrictions, anyone who has traveled from countries where the new variant of the virus has been circulating – including the U.K. and South Africa – is required to quarantine for 14 days. In addition to quarantining, people who have traveled from these areas are strongly encouraged to be tested within seven days of returning to Washington. Our neighbors to the north have instituted a stricter policy for travelers from the U.K. Canadian health officials announced this week that the country will ban travelers from the U.K. from entering the country, joining a long list of European countries that have done the same. More than 40 countries have banned U.K. travelers, according to the BBC, due to the circulation of this new strain of the coronavirus.

The city council held its last meeting of the year last week, as the upcoming December 28 meeting has since been canceled, according to the city website. The ad hoc committee meeting on law enforcement and public safety that was set for next Monday will now take place on January 11. The council finance and budget committee meeting set for this week has also been canceled, as has the planning commission meeting. As a reminder, city offices will be closed for the holidays on December 24 and 25, and January 1. The first city council regular business meeting of the New Year is set for January 4, and unless some miracle occurs, the meeting will take place virtually instead of in person.

If the small snow flurries that came to Jefferson County on Monday left you wanting more, the Hurricane Ridge road will be open throughout the winter holidays, except for Friday, December 25. As of the latest snow report, about 47 inches of snow has fallen at the Ridge in the past six days. The Hurricane Ridge Road will be open 9am to 4pm weather permitting, and the Hurricane Ridge Ski, Snowboard, and Tubing Area will be open from 10am to 4pm. Call the Olympic National Park for weather information, as the conditions can change quickly.

And that's it for today's local news. 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. I'm Lily Haight. Thanks for listening.