

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant, with local news and commentary for Thursday, December 24, 2020.

\*\*\*

Two new cases of COVID-19 were added on Wednesday, bringing the county total to 209. There are 23 results pending. For the latest numbers go to the Jefferson County Public Health Department web page (<https://jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/1466/Case-Information>) or the Jefferson County Government Facebook Page. County Health officer Dr. Tom Locke said earlier this week that the county seems to have escaped the post-Thanksgiving bump in cases, due to people following protocols. He advised that we continue to do so for the Christmas holiday.

Governor Jay Inslee yesterday made changes to his "Stay Safe-Stay Health" proclamation, requiring anyone traveling from the countries where a new variant of the COVID virus exists to quarantine for a full 14 days, and test themselves within seven days of their return.

Inslee also modified Religious Services and Singing in Enclosed Spaces prohibitions, removing the indoor and outdoor capacity limits of 200 people and redesignating that number as the recommended maximum capacity. So he's giving people the choice to be responsible. It also clarifies the restriction on singing. It applies only to indoor singing by congregations. Soloists performing indoors and singing by the congregation outdoors is permitted as long as every singer wears a face covering, which certainly hobbles the joy of performing and listening.

\*\*\*

A pilot network of weather stations was installed this week at key locations along county roads, measuring the temperature of the road surface and sending that data to meteorologists. The data is then used to help our Public Works staff stay on top of changing conditions. Each solar-powered, cellular-connected weather station is located along a priority anti-ice route with a speed limit of 50 MPH or higher. Knowing when a road will freeze allows the Road Maintenance Division to pre-treat surrounding roads to fight heavy frost before it forms. As this week's first significant snowfall of the season demonstrated,, weather varies widely around the county. The new stations reported that the snow was heaviest on the ground between Four Corners area into Port Townsend.

\*\*\*

Jefferson County Administrator Philip Morley got a salary bump this week, raising his compensation to nearly \$142,000. Morley, who has served in the position for more than 12 years and supervises about 300 employees, still receives less than many administrators in other counties. Morley earns far more than his bosses, the county commissioners, who get \$79,000 a year. According to the Jefferson County News Facebook page, the highest paid public employee is Jefferson Healthcare CEO Mike Glenn with \$256,000. Other high earners include our PUD director – \$175,000; City Manager – \$156,000 and Port Director – \$155,000.

Jefferson County's mean income is around \$39,000, which means that most of us will get stimulus checks if the government ever gets off the dime.

\*\*\*

Washington State's eviction moratorium extends to March 31, 2021, banning residential evictions and late fees on unpaid rent while compelling landlords to offer tenants repayment plans for the deferred rent. Tenants, then, still owe the money and landlords are under no obligation to forgive or decrease that amount.

\*\*\*

Jefferson Healthcare's Oncology Department has established a Cancer Survivorship Clinic, which will address the needs of cancer survivors and their caregivers as well as bridging care gaps for patients in remission. Those who have finished their treatment at the hospital are encouraged to schedule a survivorship visit to discuss diagnosis, treatment, and symptoms during the post-cancer period. After such a meeting, patients will receive a personalized document that summarizes their treatment and care plan going forward. Those interested in the service should call 360-344-3091 to schedule an appointment.

\*\*\*

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](mailto:news@kptz.org).

This is Charlie Bermant. Thank you for listening.