

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Lily Haight with local news for January 6, 2021.

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The total number of coronavirus cases in Jefferson County has increased to 237, after the Public Health department reported 17 new cases so far this week. There are currently 64 test results still pending.

The Washington State Department of Health is rolling out a new website today to help individuals find out if they qualify to be vaccinated. The site, called PhaseFinder, asks you for basic information, such as your age and your occupation to determine when you may qualify for vaccination. To learn more, visit the Washington State Department of Health website (<https://wadoh.jotform.com/203418436942154>).

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.

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City residents will have the opportunity to meet the final candidates who are up for the position of Port Townsend's police chief at a public meeting coming up next Monday, January 11. The virtual meeting will give residents the opportunity to meet each candidate and then give their feedback to city officials. According to city manager John Mauro, each and every comment will be read and taken into consideration as the hiring committee makes their decision on the new police chief. The meeting will take place from 4:30 to 6pm and will be directly followed by a city council committee meeting on public safety and law enforcement, which will begin at 6:30pm. Information for how to join these meetings will be available on the city's website and Facebook page.

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There might be an increase in Bigfoot sightings in Jefferson County this January, as members of the Local 20/20 Climate Outreach Group will be encouraging citizens to enroll in a community carbon emissions reduction program called "Taming Bigfoot." The Taming Bigfoot competition was originally created five years ago, when Local 20/20 engaged county residents and businesses in a competition to help reduce carbon emissions in Jefferson County. The program was a success, and in two months the nearly 100 participants collectively reduced their carbon emissions by 10 percent. That's why the Climate Outreach Group is relaunching the program, with the hope of helping the city and county reach its collective goal of reducing our greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050.

Teams will be formed this month, with the competition running from February through April. During the competition, each team will measure their carbon footprint on a regular basis so that by the end of the competition, the organizers can determine which team was most able to lower their carbon footprint by making lifestyle changes in transportation, homelife, at work, and in consumption. Throughout the competition, there will be updates on team standings interspersed with short informational presentations on the broader context of climate change as it relates to our community. Results will be announced in early May, with prizes (donated by local businesses) awarded to the teams achieving the greatest emission reductions. To learn more, and to join a team, go to <https://www.taming-bigfoot.org/>.

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Stargazers will be happy to learn that the Port Townsend skies might get a bit darker this year. According to city manager John Mauro, in an effort to save money on street lighting and cut down on light pollution, the city will be considering joining the “Dark Skies Initiative.” Dark Skies is a global initiative to preserve the night sky through the implementation and enforcement of quality lighting policies and dark-sky education.

Cities can apply to be designated as a Dark Sky Community by altering the lighting policies in town, including putting shields around street lamps and limiting the number of street lamps in town.

City council received a public comment from a local Port Townsend resident, asking that the city consider the Dark Skies initiative, Mauro responded by saying the city will be working on a proposal to reduce spending on electricity and street lights, and potentially participating in the Dark Skies movement. This was reflected in the 2021 budget, which shows the city plans to save \$45,000 by minimizing street lighting and joining the Dark Skies Initiative. According to a Light Pollution Map provided by the <https://darksitefinder.com/maps/world.html#4/39.00/-98.00>, Jefferson County is one of the only places in the entire Puget Sound area with moderate darkness, which allows residents to easily see the stars at night, and even at times, the Milky Way.

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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](mailto:news@kptz.org). I’m Lily Haight. Thanks for listening.