

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Lily Haight with local news for September 1, 2021.

Jefferson County Public Health reported 10 new cases of COVID-19 yesterday for a total of 27 new cases so far this week. Right now, there are 46 cases in active isolation and 67 test results pending. August had the highest recorded number of cases in Jefferson County since the start of the pandemic. 175 cases in total were reported in Jefferson County during the month of August. According to Barney Burke, who leads KPTZ's emergency response team, that's more than twice the number in any previous month (there were 82 in January 2021 and 79 in November 2020). In just one month, these 175 new cases account for 25 percent of all 695 total cases recorded in Jefferson County. It is believed that the actual number is higher, but many people who use home testing kits do not report the results to the local health department. Nearly 100% of new cases in Washington and the U.S. are the Delta variant. Delta results in a higher number of cases requiring hospitalization and is significantly more contagious than all other variants to date.

The city clerk announced Monday that city council meetings will go back to being entirely virtual for the foreseeable future, due to the increase in COVID-19 cases in Jefferson County right now. For a short moment in time, city council members were hosting their regular Monday meetings in person again at city hall, but now the council will be back to meeting online. City residents who wish to participate in city meetings virtually can do so by going to the city's website (<https://cityofpt.us/citycouncil/page/council-meetings>). Public comment can be sent in written form prior to the meeting by emailing publiccomment@cityofpt.us, or by attending the virtual meeting and raising your virtual hand when the time for comment arises.

Hurricane Ridge and Deer Park, two popular summer destinations in the Olympic National Park, have been closed since Sunday afternoon due to an ongoing search for what park officials are describing a "potentially dangerous man." National Park officials closed Deer Park campground and evacuated campers Sunday afternoon, as the man's last known location was at Deer Park. The Clallam County Sheriff's Office, who is assisting the Park Service, posted on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/clallamcountysheriff/>) that the man is known to be armed and there is information to suggest he has been using drugs and possibly experiencing a mental health crisis. According to the post, the individual is a white male in his 30s who lives locally in the nearby area. Officials say he has access to food, water and camping gear, and multiple agencies including the FBI are assisting to search trails and campsites in the National Park. No injuries have been reported and no one has been directly threatened. Park officials said there is not any immediate threat to local residents. The last update from the National Park yesterday afternoon stated Deer Park Road remains closed at the park boundary and Hurricane Ridge Road is closed above Heart O' the Hills campground.

The Mountain View Pool which has remained closed since August 16, due to lack of staff and resources needed to maintain the pool, will now be operated by the Olympic Peninsula YMCA. The pool was open for only a short few months, starting in March of 2021, after being shut down for COVID-related reasons, with an agreement in place for YMCA staff to help support the reopening efforts. But lack of staff, and repeated equipment failure of the ancient aquatic system led to another pool closure this month. At the last city council meeting, the council voted unanimously to allow the city manager to execute an agreement with the Olympic YMCA to operate the Mountain View Pool for two years, for a total of \$400,000 per year. According to city public works director Steve King, the two-year arrangement will put the YMCA in full operation of the pool, which will free up city staff time to work on major mechanical issues with the pool. The contract also allows time for city staff to brainstorm funding solutions for the pool, which will eventually need to be upgraded to a

more modern aquatic facility. The current pool was built in 1963. The partnership will also allow the YMCA to hire the staff they need to run pool operations, and reopen the pool as soon as the positions fill. Right now, the YMCA is advertising for three open positions at the Mountain View pool – the Aquatics Manager position, and two lifeguard positions. More information about the open positions can be found at the Olympic Peninsula YMCA website (<https://www.olympicpeninsulaymca.org/> > Employment > Location=98368)

The employee shortage due to the ongoing global pandemic may have an impact on travel plans for those celebrating the holiday weekend. The Washington State Ferries announced that no more reservations will be taken for Labor Day weekend on the Port Townsend/Coupeville ferry and the Anacortes/San Juan Islands ferry due to the possibility of disrupted sailings from a lack of crew. Suspending reservations is intended to increase the reliability of service for existing reservation holders, according to a WSF press release. Those who have already made reservations will not be affected, and those without reservations should plan ahead for potential delays and extended waits at the terminals. The difficulty of traveling right now may be a good reminder that we are still in the middle of a global pandemic, and according to state and local health officials, cases are on the rise.

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.