

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant, with news and commentary for Thursday April 2, 2020.

The number of COVID Latest stats in Jefferson County are increasing, with the current number nearly doubling from a week ago. But since we are a small county, this reflects a jump from eight to seventeen.

Of 531 patients tested 469 have come back negative while just 45 are awaiting the results. A switch in the lab used by Jefferson Healthcare has decreased the wait time, according to a hospital spokesperson.

Adding to the list of summer cancellations, Centrum announced yesterday that it has cancelled its 2020 arts programs, putting, among others, Voice Works, Fiddle Tunes, Jazz and Blues Festivals on hold until 2021. Chamber Music and Choro events were already postponed.

In a statement Centrum Executive Director Robert Birman expressed regret about the postponement, stating that the cancellation puts public safety first, above any business or cultural needs.

Should COVID-19 cases decrease and limits relax Centrum could present some smaller events throughout the summer. These would be alternative programs that can be implemented on short notice.

This is the largest announced cancellation so far. The Wearable Art Show, Women in Film and the Rhody Run are already gone, while the Rhododendron, Wooden Boat and Film Festivals are still undetermined. As for the Thing festival, a spokesman told KPTZ it still plans to announce this year's schedule on April 26 with ticket going on sale on May first. So even as we social distance, optimism still exists.

While there are several to-go restaurant options available locally the businesses are suffering, along with the servers for whom tips are a significant portion of their income. In response, a web page designed to distribute money to tip dependent workers is now operating. Go to [serviceindustry dot tips](http://serviceindustry.dotips.com) and select Port Townsend for the opportunity to tip a randomly selected service worker at a local restaurant. The site contains a form for service workers to register, for future random selection.

While the direct impact of COVID 19 on Jefferson County is minimal, possibly due to our embracing of social distancing rules, county officials are preparing for the worst. Department of Emergency Management head Willie Bence told the county commissioners on Monday the anticipated need for medical care creates a need for additional patient beds, so the agency is working toward establishing a field hospital along with an expanded local morgue facility.

There is a certain local element that resents newcomers and tourists, touting a negative effect on our bucolic little community. But COVID 19 has changed snobbery into survival, as locals are all a twitter about tourists coming to the Peninsula to escape Seattle. Many of our beaches are crowded, and not just with locals. In a free society you can't prevent people from coming to town, but there are some ways to keep them out. The local transfer station now requires a Jefferson County ID to use the facility, as many Kitsap County residents were crossing the border to dump their garbage.

In other trash collection news, Olympic Disposal was scheduled to pick up the old yard waste cans for recycling on the week of April 13 but has now postponed that action to a later date.

Following up on the postponement of the Port Townsend Farmer's Market, organizers released a statement yesterday with plans to hold a small tightly managed market on Saturday, April 25. It also hoes to launch an online Farmers Market on that date.

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon Monday through Friday and at five PM Monday through Thursday. You can contact us through news at kptz dot org.

This is Charlie Bermant with today's news, keeping in mind that everything could change tomorrow.