

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant, with local news and commentary for Thursday, February 25, 2021.

New COVID-19 cases in Jefferson County have slowed to a trickle, with two new cases reported on Wednesday. The total number of positive cases is 333, with 22 awaiting test results. The county follows a “no news is good news” template, so if you don't get a callback you are, for the time being, virus free.

The Port Townsend and Chimacum School Districts have both chosen new superintendents, after a months-long collaborative search process that drew from the same candidate pool. The announcement came last night after a joint meeting of the two boards, after which time the final choices were announced.

Highline Schools employee Linda Rosenbury is the new Port Townsend superintendent, while Edmunds High School principal Dr. Scott Mauk will head the Chimacum district. Both have extensive education backgrounds in a variety of areas. Both will take over on July 1, replacing interim superintendents hired for this school year in order to not rush the search. The two boards agreed to work collaboratively with one search consultant, Human Capital Enterprises, during their concurrent superintendent search processes. Human Capital Enterprises has supported both districts to complete the search for a superintendent and find the best candidate for each district. Finalists were selected from a pool of semi-finalists who were interviewed on January 23 by the school boards. Interviews took place during the week of February 1 and included community input. Both school boards selected the final candidates by unanimous votes on February 6,, but the names were not made public at that time in order for the respective boards to run complete background checks and negotiate contracts. Salaries will be determined at future board meetings.

COVID-19 inoculations have picked up steam at Jefferson Healthcare after several weeks of sporadic vaccine supply. This week the hospital received a first-dose Pfizer shipment for the second consecutive week, after a four week drought. It also received an allocation of second-dose Moderna vaccines for 200 patients. This week appointment links were emailed to over 3500 community members 70 years old and up. If the vaccine continues to be available, the hospital could add those as young as 65 in the next three or four weeks, according to the hospital's website. Clinics operate five days a week, closed on weekends.

As of Tuesday, we provided 8,135 total vaccinations and completed 3,408 two dose regimens, which represents 14% of the county's population. The vaccination process benefits from increased efficiency through volunteer support. Nurses and doctors have stepped up to be temporary vaccinators while others help to monitor patients, and direct traffic. The addition of temporary vaccinators and volunteers has made it possible for regular staff to get back into the clinics, hospital and, desk jobs to care for their patients, according to the hospital's web site.

Those over 65 who want to receive the vaccine can register on the hospital's website (<https://jeffersonhealthcare.org/covid-19-vaccine/>) and will receive an email notification when they are qualified to receive the vaccine and there is an available dose. At that time they will have 48 hours to respond, or someone else will get the slot. If there is no response to the invitation, the recipient's name will go back on the list, and a new link will be emailed when the next vaccine shipment is received. Alternatively, those over 65 can now schedule appointments by calling a dedicated line at the Department of Emergency Management, 360-344-9791, between 9am and 4pm weekdays. If you missed the number, log on to kptz.org to see a transcript of today's news.

Jefferson Transit is considering a new direct route to the Kingston Ferry terminal, where riders could access the mainland either through the Washington State Ferry to Edmunds or the Kitsap Ferry to Seattle. To gauge interest the agency posted a link to a one page survey on its website (<https://jeffersontransit.com/>), which asks a single question: Would you like to see service between Port Townsend and the Kingston Ferry terminal. If not, explain your reasoning or what you'd like to see instead. We expect the community will be divided between those who want greater access to services, healthcare, and the airport and others who it would seem this would just make this area more of a bedroom community. Moving more wealthy people here does nothing for our affordable housing problem.

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.

This is Charlie Bermant. Thank you for listening.