

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Lily Haight with local news for August 4, 2021.

Preliminary results from yesterday's primary show that Libby Uerner-Wennstrom and Tyler Vega will go on to the final election in the race for City Council Position 5. Uerner-Wennstrom won about 76% of the votes while Vega came in second with about 20% of the votes. The third candidate, Sky Hardesty-Thompson won 4% of the votes.

While there are three seats up for election on the City Council, position 5 was the only with more than two candidates, which spurred the need for a primary election. In the final election on November 2, voters in Port Townsend will have to choose three new council members: Vega and Uerner-Wennstrom will be on the ballot along with Cameron Jones and Ben Thomas, who are running for Position 1 on the council, and Aislinn Diamanti who is running unopposed for Position 2.

Jefferson County Public Health reported five new cases of COVID-19 yesterday. That makes for 11 new cases so far this week. In the past two weeks we have had a spike in cases, with more than 50 new cases in the past three weeks. Right now, there are 31 cases in active isolation and four test results pending. With a case rate of 138 per 100,000, Jefferson County is seeing its second highest recorded rate since the pandemic began.

In Washington, there has been a 63% increase in cases, with a 33% increase in hospitalizations. Public health director Dr. Allison Berry recommends individuals wear masks indoors in public spaces, whether vaccinated or not.

There are many ways to get your vaccine. One of the easiest ways is to walk into the Jefferson Healthcare Express Clinic on Sheridan Street. No appointment is necessary to receive the one-time Johnson and Johnson vaccine. That clinic is open seven days a week from 9am to 7pm. For more vaccine options, visit the Jefferson County Public Health website (<https://www.jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/1529/COVID-19-Vaccine>).

Smoke blanketed the Cape George and Discovery Bay neighborhoods yesterday as fire officials from the National Forest Service and from the Department of Natural Resources worked to put out a fire on Protection Island. A plume of smoke rising from the shore of the island was first seen by residents of Cape George and Discovery Bay around 10 in the morning. The island, which is a National Wildlife Refuge, has only one human inhabitant, Marty Bluewater, who posted on Facebook that he was in Seattle and was getting updates from officials on the state of the fire. In an interview with King5, Bluewater said the fire was about a quarter mile from his home, but as far as he knew, his house was not damaged. The cause of the fire is as yet unknown. Officials from the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office announced on Facebook that federal fire crews are investigating the cause of the fire and asked that anyone who may have seen any suspicious boats or activity report what they saw to the Puget Sound Interagency Coordinating Center at 425-783-6150.

Protection Island is a vital habitat for seabirds and marine mammals. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife, it is thought to be the home of the third largest rhinoceros auklet colony in North America. It also is one of the last two breeding sites for tufted puffins in the Salish Sea, and the beach habitat is where many harbor seals and elephant seals give birth and raise their pups. It was designated as a National Wildlife Refuge in 1982. Bluewater told King5 that it appeared as though the fire happened in a grassy area and not where there is a lot of wildlife. The fire caused smokey conditions which by yesterday afternoon and evening spanned from Port

Townsend to Port Hadlock and Chimacum areas. This morning, a heavy marine fog blanketed Port Townsend, making it difficult to tell if the smoke lingered.

A major portion of the Landmark Tree located in Gateway Park collapsed last Wednesday. The Corkscrew Willow tree is a mature tree that shades Gateway Park, a small green space at the corner of Kearney Street and Sims Way. The tree and park have been protected by a conservation easement from the Jefferson Land Trust since 1990. After a large section collapsed, the city hired an arborist to assess the damage, who, with help from city parks employees, then performed some select tree trimming to stabilize the part of the tree that hangs over Sims Way. This allows for further evaluation as to whether the tree can be saved. The goal is to minimize stress on the tree in the short term and reduce the risk of continued failure.

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.