

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Lily Haight with local news for October 26, 2021.

The Puget Sound region experienced its first major wind storm of the fall this weekend. The National Weather Service advised Sunday that Admiralty Inlet could experience wind speeds up to 45 miles per hour and gusts up to 60 miles per hour through this evening. The weather event is due to a low pressure system off the coast, known often as a "bomb cyclone". Heavy rainfall was experienced up and down the west coast including in California. The National Weather Service also warned of potential for tidal overflow Monday in the North Olympic Peninsula as an unusually high tide combined with strong waves. Jefferson County PUD worked through the storm to restore power to over 300 East Jefferson County Residents since Saturday. Downed trees and power lines caused outages in Port Hadlock, Coyle, Beckett Point and Quilcene. Across western Washington over 100,000 people lost power Sunday and two people in Issaquah were killed by a falling tree.

Data suggests that Washington State COVID-19 cases are plateauing, Health Officer Dr. Allison Berry said Monday. While it is a victory that case rates are no longer climbing, a plateau at the current level is still not good, she said. Jefferson County Public Health added 8 new cases of COVID-19 yesterday bringing the total confirmed case count to 1,130. 55 cases are in active isolation.

Since last week about 60 new cases of COVID-19 have been added to our total local case count. As a result the case rate in Jefferson County is up significantly this week. These large increases were due in part to two large workplace outbreaks of the virus Berry said. One outbreak occurred at a workplace in Jefferson County and infected 12 people. The other occurred across the border in Grays Harbor County but infected Jefferson County residents. Both outbreaks occurred in workplaces that had low rates of vaccination among their staff Berry said.

The last large local outbreak infected mostly children at the Brinnon School District. Berry reported Monday that the outbreak in Brinnon has been completely resolved with no complications or deaths. Jefferson and Clallam Counties are lucky in that they have not seen widespread infection among school aged children like many other parts of the state have, she said. There is still a push locally to vaccinate more children ages 12 to 17. Only 50% of eligible children have been vaccinated. Overall Jefferson County has one of the highest rates of vaccination in the state with roughly 77% of the eligible population fully vaccinated. So don't let your guard down, Berry said. Stay safe and get vaccinated. The unvaccinated are eight times more likely to contract COVID-19 in Jefferson County.

In maritime news, a container ship caught fire Saturday in the Strait of Juan De Fuca and lost over 40 cargo containers. The Zim Kingston container ship was just outside of Victoria, British Columbia Saturday when a fire broke out and ignited mining chemicals, the primary cargo of the ship. Sixteen crew members were evacuated as five others stayed aboard to try and contain the fire. Cold water was sprayed on the ship not to douse the flames but instead to stop them from spreading. The fire burned through at least 10 containers and continued to smoulder into a stormy Sunday. Strong winds and rough waves of up to 30 feet have made recovery of the containers difficult. As of Monday the containers posed no risk to local mariners as they began drifting north along the west side of Vancouver Island. The Zim Kingston remains in place roughly 28 miles off the shore of Port Townsend while it awaits clearer weather.

Things are getting spooky scary skeletons on the Olympic Peninsula as Halloween quickly approaches. The CDC announced this week it believes outdoor trick-or-treating is safe for families to enjoy this year. Last year Halloween festivities were discouraged when less was known about the spread of COVID-19 outdoors. CDC Director Rochelle Walensky said Sunday that as long as families avoid large crowds and stay outdoors, Halloween activities should pose little infection risk. Many yearly Halloween and October events have been cancelled because of high COVID-19 case rates, including Port Townsend's Halloween Parade through downtown. Many other outdoor events are going forward though including the drive-thru Trick or Treat this Saturday at the Port Townsend Elks Lodge.

That's all from me for today. Today's broadcast was written and edited by Carmen Jaramillo. KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon and five PM Monday through Thursday and at noon on Friday and Saturday. You can contact us through news at kptz.org. I'm Lily Haight. Thanks for listening.