

Good afternoon you're tuned into KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Simon Jaynes with local news for October 28, 2021.

Jefferson County Public Health reported 9 new cases of COVID-19 yesterday. This brings our total case count, since the beginning of the pandemic, up to 1,142. There are currently 45 active cases in isolation, and our two-week case rate is 254 per 100,000. Halloween kicks off the holiday season this Saturday, and with it we have the potential for a 6th wave of COVID-19 infections. In her public health briefing this week, health officer Dr Allison Berry urged people who are throwing parties to consider making them vaccinated residents only, and for those attending outdoor events to consider wearing a face mask if around large groups of people. Traditional trick-or-treating by children in residential neighborhoods can be done safely, Berry said, "and be done very well to celebrate the holiday." According to Berry, the danger lies in holiday travel and large gatherings that could quickly add to already high rates of infections on the Peninsula. Case rates have decreased from early September, but according to Dr Berry, they have plateaued at a dangerously high rate that points to too few residents being vaccinated and too few precautions being taken. The current case rates in Jefferson and Clallam counties have risen in the last two weeks, and they are higher than the peak seen during last year's holiday surge, Berry said.

In other COVID-19 news, the Clallam Bay Corrections Center, located on the North Olympic Peninsula, continues to be the only prison in Washington State with a facility-wide outbreak. The facility houses 664 inmates and has reported 107 new cases of COVID-19 in the last 30 days.

The City of Port Townsend, The Port of Port Townsend, and the Jefferson County PUD are co-hosting a virtual town hall meeting to discuss the Sims Gateway Tree Project on November 9 at 5pm. The goal of the Town Hall meeting is to ensure a more comprehensive and common understanding of the elements of the project. To this end, the City, Port, and PUD will provide brief presentations and then open it up to questions from the community, with the goal that ideas and perspectives are incorporated. The Gateway Tree project aims to address multiple encroachments on the city's power grid that stem from the tall trees and boat masts along Sims way, while also recognizing that this tree-lined section of road is an iconic feature of Port Townsend, along with The Boat Haven and Kah Tai Lagoon. The three agencies – with the Port as lead – have applied for a Jefferson County Public Infrastructure Grant of \$1 million to offset half of the overall project of \$2 million, which includes tree removal, undergrounding power lines, installing a multi-use path, replanting trees, expanding the boatyard at Boat Haven, and associated permitting. For more information regarding this project or for instructions on how to participate in the virtual town hall meeting November 9, you can visit the city's web page at <https://cityofpt.us/engagept/page/sims-gateway-and-boat-yard-expansion-project-virtual-town-hall-november-9-500pm>. KPTZ will broadcast this important town hall meeting LIVE on November 9, from 5 to 6pm.

Northwind Art announced on Monday that that it has hired Kathleen Garrett to fill the role of Exhibits Director. Garrett has an extensive background working with arts organizations and community-based non-profits, including as curator of art at Whatcom Museum in Bellingham and the Museum of Northwest Art in La Conner. Garrett succeeds Michael D'Alessandro, who leaves at the end of the month to start a new career path.

Executive Director Teresa Verraes, says, “We are just thrilled to be welcoming Kathleen to our team, Kathleen comes highly recommended and with the experience needed for this really important role. Much of the 2022 exhibit calendar has already been planned which makes for an easier transition and gives her time to acclimate and prepare for the future.”

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 Simon Jaynes. Thanks for listening and have a great day.