

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Carmen Jaramillo with local news for November 2, 2021.

A pair of men are facing felony charges this week after being caught red handed trying to steal wood from a cedar bridge in western Jefferson County. Department of Natural Resources authorities were alerted to the potential theft Thursday morning, when a hunter reported hearing chainsaws in the Clearwater Natural Resources Corridor. A DNR officer who was already nearby found two men underneath a cedar bridge harvesting wood with chainsaws. Jose Salinas and Troy Crandell were booked into Jefferson County Jail on felony charges of theft, malicious mischief and trafficking in stolen property. Authorities believe the two men planned to harvest the western red cedar and sell it on the black market to nearby cedar mills. According to authorities, in order to access the bridge the men would have to have broken into a locked gate. The bridge is being monitored for any structural damage as a result of the wood removed from the bottom.

The national, state and local case rates of COVID-19 are still at a plateau this week, Dr. Allison Berry told the Board of County Commissioners Monday. The problem is that the case rate is still far too high. Nationally the current plateau is higher than three previous peaks of transmission. Jefferson County Public Health added 16 new cases of COVID-19 yesterday bringing the total confirmed case count to 1,164. 31 cases are in active isolation and after three people were discharged this weekend, only one case remains hospitalized locally.

The Pfizer vaccine was approved last week for use in children ages five to eleven. Berry said we may begin to see pediatric formulations of the vaccine available locally starting next week. Berry urged parents to get their children vaccinated once doses become available. Although generally COVID-19 is less severe in children the virus has still hospitalized over 67,000 children nationally she said.

Today is election day. Voters will find several uncontested races this year for the hospital district, the Port of Port Townsend, the local school boards and many other positions. Contested races include those for two Port Townsend City Council seats, one Quilcene School Board seat and one Port Ludlow Fire Commissioner seat. Ballots can be turned in at ballot drop boxes until 8pm on election night. Washington State has same-day voter registration, meaning from now until 8pm you can register to vote and turn in your ballot in minutes. Going into election day Jefferson County has seen 28% of ballots returned, a significant decrease from the 42% turnout in the August 3 primary, although that race only included Port Townsend voters. Tune in to KPTZ tonight at 8pm when Lily Haight will join Bill Mercier to announce preliminary elections results live on air.

Homelessness is deadly. Jefferson County residents should be well aware of that by now. Harry Peacock was 25 years old before he took his own life last Wednesday sometime in the early morning hours. Peacock was found dead, hanging from a tree near Jefferson Healthcare on Sheridan Street in Port Townsend.

Security footage from the hospital showed him alone entering the area around 8:30pm on Tuesday. In the early morning hours he could be seen climbing the tree, attaching a strap to a branch and lowering himself down. He was discovered that morning around 7:30. Port Townsend Police Chief Thomas Olson called it a clear cut case of suicide. Harry has lived and worked in Jefferson County since he was six years old. He attended Chimacum Schools and I grew up classmates with his younger sister. Harry is survived by a three-year-old son. Over the

years he was known to have worked at many local businesses, including Good Man Sanitation, Peninsula Pest Control, The Bayview Restaurant and Les Schwab Tires. Since the pandemic, Harry had been unemployed and living in a camper at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds. He was one of many residents of the fairgrounds that were moved to a new open-air shelter on Mill Road. In September he told *The Leader* he was unhappy about the change and that he felt the new location did not have adequate amenities already set up for its residents when they were required to move.

Since I began working in this town as a journalist three years ago we have lost many vibrant and important members of our homeless community to the elements, to substances and now to suicide. Victoria Brown was 23. John Caswell was 62. William Mears was 54. Cassandra Aldrich was 56. Edwin Wiseby was 54. I feel complicit, do you? Please keep Harry's family in your thoughts and if you are struggling reach out for help. You may find a hundred hands will catch you when you fall. Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 24/7 at 800-273-8255.

That's all from me for today. KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon and 5pm PM Monday through Thursday and at noon on Friday and Saturday. You can contact us through news at kptz.org. I'm Carmen Jaramillo. Thanks for listening.