

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Diane Walker with your local news and commentary for Tuesday, October 6, 2026.

Highway 19 was blocked in both directions for several hours this morning after a semi truck collided with a PUD guy pole shortly after 4am, trapping the driver under active power lines and cutting electrical service to over 3500 customers along Highway 19 and Beaver Valley Road to Port Ludlow. PUD crews had to extend the outage in order to safely access the damaged area and replace the broken pole.

Ferries are back online today after an engineering crew sickout yesterday left 13 of the ferry system's 18 vessels out of service, triggering long wait times, service cancellations for Bainbridge, Kingston, Vashon Island, and Port Townsend, and causing loading delays across the Puget Sound.

According to the *Washington State Standard*, 23 engine room employees called in sick yesterday, and every qualified employee that could replace them on shift refused to fill in. Work stoppages or strikes among ferry workers are prohibited under state law, but representatives of the union Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association told reporters the union didn't coordinate the sickout, instead describing it as "a frantic cry for help from an abused and frustrated group of highly-skilled and committed workers."

While union members complained of uncompetitive wages, excessive overtime, and burnout, the ferry agency notes that chief engineers have a base salary of \$157,000 that can rise to \$350,000 with overtime, retirement accrual and paid time off.

Governor Ferguson, who has repeatedly touted his efforts to assure riders of more reliable service, met with union leadership Monday morning and told frustrated ferry workers he's committed to improving the staffing levels that precipitated the sickout but that he expected every vessel on every route to be running Tuesday morning.

East Jefferson Fire Rescue has been awarded over \$83,000 in federal FEMA funding. The money will be used to purchase and install a source-capture exhaust system at EJFR Station 7 in Port Ludlow to capture exhaust directly from emergency vehicles, reducing firefighter exposure to diesel exhaust and other harmful contaminants.

In related news, it's National Fire Prevention Week, and this year's theme focuses on the safe recharging of lithium-ion batteries, which can overheat, start a fire, or even explode if they are damaged or charged the wrong way.

To charge your device safely, use the cord and charger that came with your device or one approved by the manufacturer, and charge devices on a table, desk, or other hard, flat surface. Unplug your device when it is fully charged. Larger items like e-bikes, scooters, and power tools should be charged outside and away from exits. Stop using your device if it feels very hot, starts to swell, is smoking, or has a strange smell. And when on a plane, keep your device where you can see it while charging. Do not charge devices in overhead compartments.

Dove House Advocacy Services has announced it will be closing the Dove House Closet. With both the state and the county cutting funding and the increase of supportive services and food at the Recovery Café, they have had to prioritize maintaining the level of services at the emergency shelter, transitional housing, and the community's advocacy space. They will no longer be taking clothing donations, and the last day to shop for clothes will be October 15.

Those seeking services should note that Community Methodist Church in Hadlock operates a free General Store every Saturday from 10-1. They offer both clothing and shoes as well as house goods, camping gear, a food pantry, and a soup kitchen, and will work hard to fill at least some of the gap created by the Dove House closing.

And finally, this Thursday, October 8, from 4:30 to 6pm, there will be a ribbon-cutting celebration for artist Jesse Joshua Watson's murals at the Seamus Sims Skatepark in Port Townsend. There will be free food and hot chocolate while supplies last, free popcorn and specials at the nearby Key City Theatre, and music by the Nu Crew and Chloroform Rags. For more information about the event, visit <http://ptcreativedistrict.org/skatepark>.

KPTZ 91.9 FM broadcasts your local news Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at noon and 5pm. You can contact us at news@kptz.org. I'm Diane Walker; thank you for listening.