

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, many events of our Chamber members as well as the Chamber have been postponed to future dates. Please check the Chamber Website for details and frequent updates: www.jeffcountychamber.org/events



SEPTEMBER 2020

Business Insider

Serving the Businesses and Citizens of Jefferson County

2020 Jefferson County Community Leadership Awards

This announcement has taken a final realization that this annual historic event was not going to be possible in this COVID-19 environment so we are thrilled to announce the 2020 Jefferson County Leadership Awards, originally scheduled for April are now on the calendar for Saturday, October 3rd-virtually! Please save the date and help us honor those dedicated professionals that have been serving our community so admirably.

Partnering with the Chamber for this event is the Port Townsend Leader who will be producing a pull-out section devoted to this event and all our nominees and awardees. Sponsorship opportunities are available through the Leader and the Chamber with event proceeds going toward seed funding for the new micro-loan and business class scholarship Chamber programs.

The award finalists, chosen with great difficulty by a team of service club volunteers from a group of highly qualified and valued nominees for 2020 include:

Business Leader of the Year Award

Presented to an individual who demonstrates a history of vision, service and leadership for the betterment of the Jefferson County Community. This individual has built a legacy of building other leaders along the way. This individual has established a reputation of character, trust and leadership for others to emulate.

- Kristen Nelson: Restaurateur: Sirens Pub, Alchemy Bistro & Wine Bar, The Old Whisky Mill and the In Between
- Amanda Milholland: The Farmer's Markets
- Carole Hasse: Sail Loft, Maritime Sector Leader

Citizen of the Year Award

Presented to an individual whose extraordinary public service has made a positive impact on the community. This individual has chosen to give back to the community and serve others. The Jefferson County community is a better place because of the efforts of this individual.

- Judith Lundgren: Wednesday night Barstool Bingo and 20 years of service to the community
- Robin Ornelas: Community volunteer & activist, board member at Jefferson County Historical Society
- Kristen Nelson: Kristen Nelson: Restaurateur: Sirens Pub, Alchemy Bistro & Wine Bar, The Old Whisky Mill and the In Between

Rising Entrepreneur Award

Presented to an individual/team who demonstrates a commitment to business and economic development. This individual embodies the entrepreneurial spirit and innovative thinking that will lead Jefferson County to sustained economic prosperity. The contribution and leadership of this individual/team is a catalyst for job creation, smart growth/development, or economic improvement in Jefferson County.

- Mike and Heather Harbin: Mo Chilli BBQ
- Matt Mortenson and Chris Brignoli: ReVision Marine

Young Professional of the Year Award

Awarded to the young professional who demonstrates excellence, creativity, and valuable service in their business and to improve the quality of life for others in the community. They serve as a role model for their peers and our community youth.

- Amanda Milholland: The Farmers Markets
- Nathan VanderVen: Strait Blast Gym

Future Business Leader Award (youth)

Awarded to a high school senior who displays leadership qualities everyday – qualities like honesty, integrity, dependability, respectfulness, and compassion. This student succeeds in academics as well as community service and serves as a role model to their peers.

- Isabella Harvey: Recent Chimacum High School graduate & Valedictorian
- Isabel Hammett: Recent Port Townsend High School graduate
- Lilly Montgomery: Recent Port Townsend High School graduate

Tickets are available online at www.jeffcountychamber.org/events.



Citizen of the Year Nominees
with New American Funding



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building business, building community

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Supplement to the
September 26, 2020

Port Townsend & Jefferson County Leader
226 Adams Street, Port Townsend WA 98368 ptleader.com

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Opportunity in Change During the Pandemic

It has been an exciting summer at the Chamber with Fall starting to ease its way into our lives, bringing with it many adoptions and changes. Like you, this pandemic has necessitated many changes



Arlene Alen

at the Chamber, and we are working through them just like many of you are seeing opportunity in the determinations we are making.

Zoom, a virtual platform, was once a fun option for meet-ups with people outside of acceptable driving range and has now become a way of life. For many of us, this will no doubt continue forever as a communication channel. Chamber Café, in August had a fabulous panel of Kris Nelson, Cindy Finny and Diana Smeland discussing what programs they were implementing to thrive going forward through this COVID environment so they could do more than just survive it. The conversation among the attendees was intense and insightful and shared real solutions, products and services that could assist each other and attendee's business. It was a great meeting and more importantly a

fabulous validation of this new format and how we have all adapted to this environment. We are continuing Chamber Café on the first and third Fridays of each month from 10-11 am and there is no cost or membership required to participate. Advance registration through the Chamber website is necessary for Zoom access,

Also on those Fridays soon you'll be able to see a new publication in your inboxes, Friday Finds. This format will provide the opportunity for weekend special sales, local deals or even one-day events or last minute opportunities that might not have fit into other communication formats or been timely. We will have up to five opportunities available for each of these Friday Finds. Reach out to admin@jeffcountychamber.org with your opportunity and your logo/photo for inclusion or with any questions you might have.

Women Doing Business kicked-off its inaugural virtual event with Congressman Derek Kilmer providing inspiration and leadership and the US Chamber of Commerce presenting him The Spirit of Enterprise Award during our event. We were honored to share in that moment for the well-deserved recognition of ongoing advocacy and achievement in elevating

the quality of life in our rural communities, his constituency. Lori Tschohl, managing member of Eagle Pipe Heating & Air was our truly inspirational speaker sharing her life lessons from flipping burgers to becoming the owner of ten-million dollar McDonald's Franchise and then the rest of her amazing journey from Burgers to Bangles to Pipes. We are thrilled that Lori will be working with Women Doing Business as a mentor in the new Mastser Minds program. We are seeking a few others to join her in sharing their success with others to assist them in fulfilling their dreams, just reach out to me for details. Please remember that WDB is not for women only, all are invited to attend, share and participate and they did during this first successful event.

We are excited to announce our partnership with the Port Townsend Leader to produce our 2020 Jefferson County Community Leadership Awards scheduled virtually for October 3rd. Zoom format provides us the opportunity of exploring this event differently than in the past and we are working diligently to make it fun as well as inspirational. Honoring the spirit and dedication of the amazing nominees of course will be the primary focus of this event and

we hope you will join us on Zoom to do that. Proceeds from this event will become the seed money fund for the Chambers upcoming micro-loan and business class scholarship fund which are so greatly needed in our community.

The Chamber, like your business, has been working diligently to continue meeting your needs with reduced revenue opportunities. Toward that end, we have arranged membership investment plans, extended memberships, creative financing and other opportunities to allow you to continue your valued membership in the Chamber while you are re-engineering your business and working toward our new normal. We are humbled by the number of new members who have joined us in the past few months seeing the need to enhance their marketing reach through ours and take advantage of additional member benefits. We invite members and community members to become more engaged in our community through Chamber opportunities including the Ambassador Program, Board of Directors, Committees, Task Forces, and sponsorships. We are committed to revitalizing our community and dedicated to your business, improving our quality of life, and leveraging our history for a bright and sustainable Jefferson County future.

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The content of this publication is prepared by the Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce. We welcome submissions from Chamber members. Send articles and photos to director@jeffcountychamber.org.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Chimacum Valley Vet Hospital & Pet Townsend Vet Clinic

Offering important health services to our four-legged friends in the community are the Chimacum Valley Veterinary Hospital and the Pet Townsend Veterinary Clinic, hospitals that are co-owned by veterinarians Dr. Abbie Doll and her partner Dr. Jeff Highbarger.

Originally starting work as veterinarians in Florida, Abbie and Jeff decided they needed a change and, after saving money for two years, spent three months traveling the country in search of their new home. They were initially drawn to the Seattle and Portland areas, but eventually decided against city life and chose Jefferson County after sensing the depth of community here. "I distinctly recall visiting the Port Townsend Farmers market one Saturday morning and feeling such joy that there were tears in my eyes," said Abbie. "We seemed to have found ourselves in the midst of the type of community that we had been dreaming of."

When they purchased the hospitals in 2010, Abbie and Jeff quickly made adjustments to fulfill the needs of the pet community. "The Port Townsend location was only open two days a week and was mostly used as an outpatient clinic," said Abbie. "We expanded the Pet Townsend Veterinary Clinic into a full-service hospital, open Monday through Friday. Both hospitals now have full surgical suites, dental suites, ultrasound, digital radiology, class 4 therapeutic lasers and full in-house laboratories."

As with most vet hospitals, the typical day or week doesn't exist. "The team arrives in the morning and the phones are already ringing off the hook," shared Abbie. "We have a full day's worth of appointments booked, as well as some time each day set aside for urgent medical cases

— yet sometimes even those appointment slots are all booked by 9 a.m. We are always seeking to balance the needs of our animal patients while considering the needs of our staff: If veterinary team members cannot take care of themselves while at work, then that team cannot reliably take care of animals who need them."

Working with animals presents a very unique set of issues that veterinarians must learn to contend with. "Something people may not always think about is how animals cannot form words to express their needs. They can't be interviewed. Animals aren't in their heads, contemplating the nature of their discomfort, thinking about their diagnosis," said Abbie. "In fact, animals are better off (in nature) when they often minimize or hide outward signs of pain or illness -- as this helps protect them from predators in the natural world. So, there's a real art to practicing veterinary medicine. We have to take the time to listen to what the client reports about the history of the case, and then we need to listen to the animal -- using our knowledge and intuition, as well as our eyes, ears, hands...and sometimes noses. Putting our hands on our patients and really palpating their bodies while looking for clues, anomalies, signs that something might be off -- there's definitely a careful investigation involved in veterinary medicine. It's a profession that keeps one on their toes."

Making sure the local pet population is well taken care of are the stellar teams at both hospitals, a staff of 38 people! Abbie and Jeff have cultivated an environment that helps their teams thrive. "I would say that we have worked really hard to create a culture of integrity," said Abbie. "And a culture of self-responsibility and

care for not only our animal patients, but for our clients, our team members and ourselves."

In response to the ongoing COVID pandemic, both hospitals have taken proper precautions to continue serving the community while operating as safely as possible. In addition to impeccable cleanliness, strict mask rules, and pre-screening households for COVID risk, the hospitals have been offering curbside service since early March. Veterinary curbside service involves clients remaining in their cars, while team members retrieve the animal patients, bringing them into the hospital for care. The hospitals also offer telemedicine consults. "We know that many of our clients probably wish they could come inside the building and we feel some anxiety knowing that we aren't making everyone happy...but we feel this is the safest option for the current moment," said Abbie. "COVID has taught us that we can't really predict the next step, and it's been a huge reminder that everything in life goes better with heaping doses of flexibility, patience and empathy."

Despite the current stresses and uncertainty of the situation, the hospitals are both preparing for the future with current and in-process certifications. Both hospitals are in the process of being accredited by The American Animal Hospital Association. "This is a huge deal in the veterinary world!" said Abbie. "To become AAHA-accredited, practices undergo a rigorous evaluation process to ensure they meet AAHA standards, which include the areas of: patient care, diagnostic imaging, laboratory,



pain management, pharmacy, safety, surgery, client service, anesthesia, contagious disease, continuing education, dentistry, facilities, medical records, leadership, and emergency/urgent care. Only 15% of all veterinary hospitals are AAHA-accredited. We are incredibly excited to have both of our hospitals in this distinguished group."

The hospitals are also proud to be certified by the American Association of Feline Practitioners as a Cat Friendly Practice and as Fear Free Certified Practice.

"We take a huge amount of pride in our work," said Abbie. "What we do really matters, to each person. I don't know of any employee that works for us that feels this is "just a job" -- and how incredible to sense this, as an employer."



1445 F St, Port Townsend, WA
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820 Chimacum Rd, Port Hadlock, WA
360-385-4488 • chimacumvet.com

MEMBER NEWS

Northwest Maritime Center

Virtual Wooden Boat Festival, September 12th, 2020

If being on the sea teaches you anything, it's that when storms come you need to be ready. You need to shorten sail, change tacks, and ride it out until the sun can shine again. The Northwest Maritime Center did all of that during the beginning of storm of Covid-19, and while the wind is still raging we're already seeing some sun breaks as we adapt our programs and events to fit the times.

Pandemic summer at the NWMC

For those of us who are used to a bustling campus all summer programs and events, it's easy to feel like nothing is going on. There certainly is less going on. The inside of our buildings campus remain closed to the public, the majority of the staff is working from home, the boatshop and boathouse are closed to public but we have safely had rowers on the water and boats in for maintenance.

We've taken learning online—in the last couple of months we've had over 80 students in online learning on subjects like radar and docking, worked with 17 families to build boats online, and we are in the process of developing online resources to support schools in the fall.

We prepared for a socially-distance sailing summer camp— running only one class a week with all participants in their own boats and limited in-door instruction. At the time of writing, we are still in Phase 2 and paused activating any in-person programs.

The Chandlery and Marine Thrift have all been serving customers safely from six feet in modified stores and limited hours. We also took the opportunity to paint our buildings while our campus had limited visitors. And

to get our feet wet for our biggest shift, we held our first-ever virtual Navigator Bruch fundraiser.

Festival goes virtual

Never missing an opportunity to create something new we are running the first-ever Virtual Wooden Boat Festival on September 12, 2020. What is a virtual wooden boat festival and why should you want to come? Rather than trying to create a sad Zoom meeting where we tried (and ultimately would fail) to recreate the je ne se quoi magic of Point Hudson jam-packed with boats and people, we decided to use the medium of the internet to pull together a collection of boats and experts we could have never gotten to all come to Port Townsend.

We brought in the R2AK Filmboss Zach Carver to oversee six teams of filmmakers to create never-before-seen mini-documentaries about everything from Viking ships to our local marine trades. Sean Koomen's from the Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding will be running a live master class. We'll have behind-the-scenes boat shop tours from boat builders, interactive panel discussions with renowned designers, mini biopics on boats and builders all with an interactive element—it's a lot of moving pieces but it's coming together really well, and, while I would rather it be in person, I think it's actually going to be really fun.

Wooden Boat Festival is all about sharing our stories, and the virtual festival is no different. Throughout the virtual festival we will bring together the wooden boat community sharing their small boat adventures to showing us the boats built during the pandemic and an international online sail-by, Zoom in with your boat.

Be among the first to see the feature Race to Alaska documentary that immerses you in the engineless boat race up the rugged coastline between Washington and Alaska. It's a film about the ultimate unscripted personal adventure; the diametric opposite of being self-quarantined at home. Don't miss the live Q&A with the filmmakers after the movie!

Presentations include experts seen annually at the in-person festival and the opportunity to connect with international experts and locations including



Hardanger Maritime Centre in Norway, Mystic Seaport in Connecticut, and the Antique Boat Museum in New York.

Live events happen only on the day but access to the majority of the content will be for a month. It's a chance to have folks "attend" who otherwise might not have been able to make the trip.

We hope to see you 'aboard' with us.

Details:

Virtual Wooden Boat Festival
September 12, 2020
virtualwbf.org

Festival Pass \$20
Festival + R2AK Pass \$30
R2AK Pass \$35

NWMC Members get in FREE



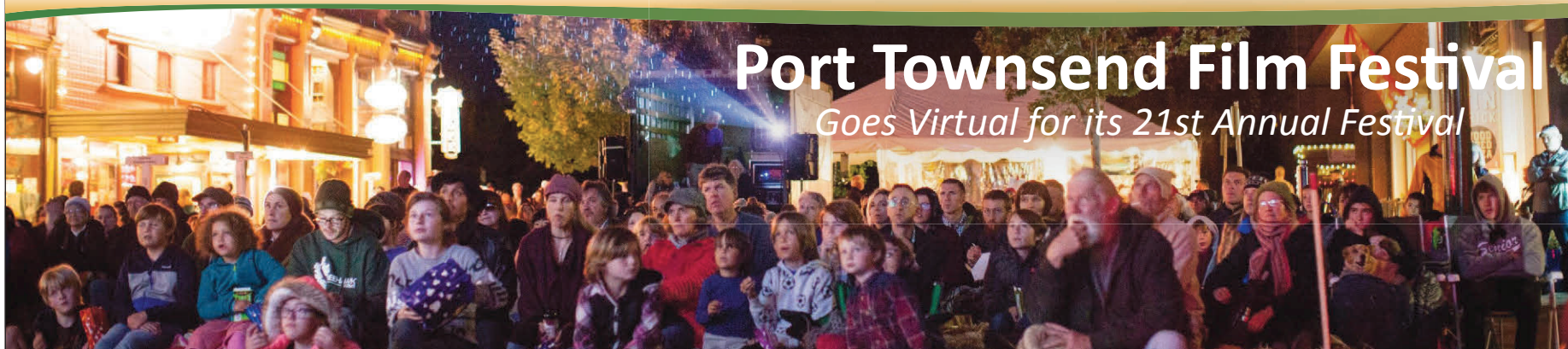
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360-385-3628
www.nwmaritime.org

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Port Townsend Film Festival

Goes Virtual for its 21st Annual Festival



Each September for the past twenty years, the Port Townsend Film Festival has filled the streets and venues of downtown with film lovers from far and near, talented filmmakers, actors, and industry professionals. Many of us have fond memories enjoying a movie under the stars in PTFF's beloved Outdoor Cinema each evening. But this year, like so many other local festivals, PTFF is unable to host a live event with crowds. But the team saw the unexpected as an opportunity to pivot in 2020—the 21st Annual Festival will take place online where patrons can watch from the comfort of their own home.

From September 24 - October 4, 2020, PTFF will bring you over 75 films, filmmaker interviews, and exclusive content. No lines!

No rain! Stream 24/7! Things may look different this year, but these important works will still be brought to our community. As with past in-person festivals, all-inclusive passes, film 6-packs, and individual film tickets will all be available so viewers can curate their perfect viewing experience. PTFF has always curated poignant, important and spirited films to the community, and this year is no different. Highlights of the 2020 festival include Billy Crystal's stirring dramatic role in *Standing Up, Falling Down* where he reminds us that independent film allows familiar performers to stretch and grow. Seeing Sean Penn's inspiring work in Haiti with *Citizen Penn* underscores that each citizen has a role to play in building a better world.

And it's not just the films that PTFF is launching online. Nearly all of the 30+ feature films will be accompanied by pre-recorded filmmaker interviews. These supplementary pieces offer unique perspective to the viewers. The specially curated and ever-popular Shorts Programs include *Characters with Character*, *Good Nature*, and more. There will be a collection of Special Events including the highly anticipated film *The Race to Alaska*, accompanied by a panel with local students and boat builders, and a panel of five acclaimed composers entitled *Music to our Ears: Composing for Film* where they share and discuss their work. Finally, PTFF is partnering with local restaurants and the Rose Theatre to offer "Dinner & A Movie" menu

specials--festival patrons can order a special meal for take-out to bring home and enjoy alongside a festival film! This program was just one way for the festival to promote and thank the many local businesses that have supported the in-person festival over the past two decades. This year's virtual festival has been made possible by PTFF's staff, donors, volunteers, and sponsors including Signature Sponsors Holley Carlson with Coldwell Banker Best Homes, KCTS9, Kitsap Bank, Mt Baker Block Building, and Windermere Agents of Good Roots.

Online streaming means many of the films in the festival can be watched anywhere in the world. Now is the time to spread the word to friends, colleagues, and family members. Passes and tickets are

available through their website at: www.ptffest.com.

The festival goes live September 24, 2020 at 8am and runs through October 4, 2020 at 11pm.



211 Taylor St, Port
Townsend, WA

360-379-1333
www.ptffest.com/

Edensaw Woods, LTD

"Things have a way of coming full circle", says Edensaw Woods, Ltd. Vice President, Buster Ferris.

Growing up in Edensaw Woods has been—to say the least—a pretty wild experience. As a kid, every family vacation, out of town sporting event, or trip to Seattle usually included either a visit to a customer, a sawmill, or both. Part of me thinks that my dad, Jim "Kiwi" Ferris, took real delight out of hearing the unified groans from my brother, Rangi, and I every time he pulled off onto some sawdust-covered road. But hey, that's childhood.

Like most kids growing up in a family business I fought it as hard as I could. Anytime we got into trouble or my mother, Auman VanSandt needed a break, my brother and I were always dragged out to Edensaw kicking and screaming. My first job when we returned from our South Pacific sailing trip was mowing the small front lawn at Edensaw. I remember thinking that it would be an easy way to get \$10.00 a week. Boy, was I in for a lesson. Upon finishing my first mow my dad came out to point out the

spots I had missed and informed me if I wanted the \$10.00, I would need to do it again. Second mow completed, and sweat streaming, I was informed: "Great job. Your check will be mailed to you once you send us the invoice." What an invoice was, I had no clue.

I learned two valuable lessons that day. First, how to make an invoice. Second, I would stay away from the family business. After coming to this realization, I fled PT as quickly as possible. Things have a way of coming full circle though, and after a handful of years I returned to Port Townsend. Before I knew it, I had landed a "temporary" job at Edensaw Woods working for none other than my father. I was only going to be there one month.

Fast forward 8 years and I am still here. Why is that, you might wonder? What it comes down to for me is the people. We have an incredibly hard-working team out here. Our director of operations, Lily Martin, has been here since she was 19 working right alongside her mother, Brenda Ryan, who has been a staple at the front counter for

just as long. Sam Raymore has been holding down the retail sales since my brother and I were brought to work for the first time. John Montgomery, with his rose-tinted glasses, has been lightening the mood and taking care of all our flooring needs for as long as I can remember. Trampas Minnihhan has been bailing me out of trouble and running the warehouse for the better part of my life. And finally, Simon Deckett has been one of the faces of Edensaw delivering our customers their material for almost 20 years now. These people, plus the "newcomers," are what make Edensaw Woods so great. We have our squabbles like any family but at the end of the day we are all on this journey together.

Watching Edensaw Woods grow to what it is today, and now starting to see it take shape into what I envision it to become, would not be possible without the dedication, understanding and determination of each and every employee. Each morning on my way to Seton Rd. I seem to be a little more excited than the day before, and I cannot thank everyone enough

for that.

With all this being said, Edensaw Woods is open and continuing forward!! We managed to make it through the mandatory shut down thanks to the hard work and understanding of our employees and the dedication of our customers.

We could not be more excited to open our doors and welcome you all back again to peruse our show room and retail store. Those of you who frequent us will notice some changes. Unfortunately, we are not allowing customers into our large warehouse and we do require that everyone wears a mask. If you forget your mask just call us and we can come out and give you one. If that special piece you need can't be found in our show room, talk to one of our sales-people and they will have

one of our warehouse staff bring out the unit for you to flip through.

Other big changes have been the re-organization and cleaning of our large warehouse, show-rooms, and mill-house. During the large warehouse cleaning it was estimated that every board was touched at least 6 times, and that we removed 4 tons of old equipment and supplies. With all this, it is safe to say that we are emerging from the first phase of this pandemic much leaner and better organized.

The first 36 years serving all your wood needs has been a true pleasure and we cannot wait to be here for you for the next 36. Thank you all for the continued support and I look forward to growing this company and community in the years to come.



211 Seton Road,
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360-385-7878
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NEW MEMBER

Pet Town

“Your pets are as important to us as our own.”

There has been a definite increase in pet ownership as a result of the pandemic. That, combined with people stockpiling supplies in the early days of the lock down, initially led to shortages of some products at Pet Town Port Townsend, a pet supply store on Sims Way that carries one of the largest selections of pet supplies in Jefferson County. The store staff tried to encourage people not to panic, and now in mid-summer, they still offer to deliver supplies to those concerned about being out in public. They have encouraged everyone to take only what they need in order to serve more people consistently.

“Our staff is friendly and knowledgeable, with a wide range of personal experience in pet ownership,” shares Chris Hawley, a leading member of the staff. “On a daily basis, we help customers with dogs, cats, reptiles, birds, fish and a variety of small animals.” Staff themselves have a number of pet friends with creative names like, Oscar, Ty, Duke, Leah, Juan Carlos, Jethro, Query, Ryley, and Marty the shop dog.

Chris continued, “All of us at Pet Town are “pet people,” and together we have a variety of pets including a number of farm animals. It’s this personal connection that makes it a joy to

help customers connect their pets to the best nutrition and supplies available. I think working at Pet Town has helped each of us take better care of our animals, and in turn helped us to provide better service to our customers.”

Owners Randy and Deanna Maag used to own the nursery that is currently PT Garden Center. At the time, they started carrying pet supplies to help get them through the slower winter months. When the nursery sold in 1998, they kept the pet supplies and opened Pet Town in the small space across the street. The business grew and they eventually moved to the Sims Way location, opening up stores in Belfair and Port Orchard.

The store enjoys a large customer base and gains new regulars all the time. The location of the Port Townsend store is ideal - right inside the city limits, where pet-owning visitors to Port Townsend can stop and have their pets’ needs taken care of. If a customer wants a specific product or food they don’t carry, staff will make the extra effort to get it for you. They order from various distributors weekly and can often provide next-day service on special orders.

The Pet Town Dog Spa, located in the adjacent space, provides many grooming services

to pet owners, and also includes a self-wash area for do-it-yourselfers. The company also takes part in a number of community partnerships, including support for the Rhododendron Festival, local school sports, Kiwanis, Discovery Bay Wild Bird Rescue, and many others.

What has changed in light of COVID-19? Chris and the eight other employees at Pet Town Port Townsend believe in providing the best possible service to customers. During the start of the Coronavirus outbreak, the store adjusted hours of operation and began curbside and delivery services. Chris shared, “We continued this for seven weeks and received a tremendous amount of support and appreciation from our customers. When we re-opened our doors, we continued to offer curbside and delivery services, and a number of customers have opted to continue that.”

The pandemic has put an enormous strain on everyone. Pets are affected by their owners’ stress, so Pet Town staff has worked very hard to help their

customers get through this difficult time. Chris points out, “We encourage people to be aware of changes to their pets’ behavior. Toys, treats and activities are all good ways to reassure pets that they are loved and secure. We also carry a large selection of herbal, CBD and pheromone-based calming aids to help.”

He continued with this poignant observation, “I would say overall that the biggest increase we’ve seen since this started is not so much the selling of a specific product or service, but rather the expressions of thanks and appreciation we have received from our customers. They know we have their best interests in mind, and their pets are as important to us as our own.”



Jefferson PUD

Keeping Customers and Employees Safe during COVID-19

At the end of February, the PUD found itself in a bind. After years of planning, our main facility had just been gutted to begin a year-long remodel and expansion. All of our 50+ employees had been moved to portable temporary buildings, where they were supposed to stay and work during construction.

As is common in these kind of buildings, the ceilings were low, the square footage was minimal, and nearly all of the surfaces were fabric. Offices were few, floor plans were open, and employee desks were packed in tightly to make sure there was a place for everyone. Our customer service lobby was tiny and often standing room only. When it became clear COVID-19 was coming, we quickly realized that no matter how much more often we cleaned and sanitized, we would not be able to adequately prevent transmission in our cramped offices.

PUD General Manager Kevin Streett made the decision to close our offices to the public in the first week of March. This did not mean closing for business, however. As essential service providers, our crews have to be able to respond to outages at a moment’s notice, 24/7. Our line crew, our substation team and our water crew were instead spread out in smaller teams to various locations, so that one group could not infect the other were anyone to become ill.

Most of our administrative and customer service staff were transitioned to working from home. Our IT staff worked tirelessly to help employees move their equipment to their homes, to set up VPNs, to change network protocols, and in many cases to order and install new equipment. Many employees workstations used tower hard drives connected to monitors. Great for running billing

or engineering software and multiple spreadsheets, not great for remote or Zoom meetings and trainings.

Despite the challenges, there have been a number of successes. The PUD’s finance department had wanted to digitize and streamline many of its processes and working from home provided just the impetus to do so. The same was true for Customer Service. Processes that formerly involved multiple visits and various sheets of paper were transitioned to online forms and simple phone call check-ins.

None of these innovations meant Customer Service had any less work. COVID-19 related shutdowns and layoffs led to record enrollment in the PUD’s low-income support programs. Though the PUD’s Board of Commissioners have suspended all shut-offs and late fees for non-payment, bills accumulated and Customer Service has spent a lot of time

helping customers craft arrangements to pay down balances over time. Customer Service is available at 360 385 5800, Monday through Friday, 9:00am to 4:30pm.

The PUD’s substation crew has also been busy. In addition to balancing the flow of power to our customers, they are responsible for the 45 miles of fiber optic cable the PUD has installed around the county. When the schools closed, General Manager Kevin Streett sent the substation team out to start building WIFI hotspots. For those without home internet, the PUD now offers a dozen free and open hotspots to drive-in and connect service. Some with 100+mbps speeds. Go to jeffpud.org/wifi-hotspots for a map to find one near you.

As the COVID-19 virus has not subsided as quickly as so many of us had hoped, It appears likely that PUD offices

will not reopen to the public until February 2021 earliest, when construction on our main facility is completed. Until then we will continue to do everything we can to keep our customers and employees safe, and the power and water and WIFI flowing for Jefferson County.



210 4 Corners Rd, Port Townsend, WA 98368

360-385-5800
www.jeffpud.org

MEMBER UPDATE

Puget Sound Express Summer Whale Report



We are blessed to live in what's been called "the American Serengeti," with some of the highest concentration of whales and dolphins and sea life anywhere in the world. However, locals and visitors alike often do not realize that Jefferson County and the Olympic Peninsula are home to such a premier wildlife viewing opportunity.

So what's been happening in the waters of the Salish Sea this summer? Plenty – even though humans have to wear masks and practice social distancing – the whales in our area are feeding, socializing, and teaching their young.

Southern Resident Orcas

The Southern Resident Orcas are a large extended family, comprised of three pods: J, K, and L pods. Both male and female offspring remain in close association with their mothers for life. The Southern Residents are the only orca population listed as endangered by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and primarily feed on salmon. Each Southern Resident pod uses a characteristic dialect of calls (sounds) to communicate. Certain calls are common between all three pods. These calls can travel 10 miles or more under water. Due to lack of salmon in the Salish Sea, these whales aren't in our region as much as in years past, but this summer, they have spent time in the area foraging, socializing, and traveling between Haro Strait and the Strait of Georgia. Critically, a number of our Southern Residents are pregnant, which we all hope results in healthy offspring.

Transient [Biggs] Orcas

Transient orcas are mammal-eating orcas that feed on a variety of prey – from harbor seals to minke whales, and even gray whale calves. Transients generally travel in small groups, usually of two to six animals, and have less persistent family bonds than resident pods. Transient orcas can range from Southern California up to the Arctic circle. Transients are also referred to as Bigg's killer whale in honor of cetologist Michael Bigg. With the abundance

of seals, porpoises, and sea lions, transients are the orcas most frequently seen in the Salish Sea. This summer, we have seen the T18s, T34s, T36s, T46s, T37As, T37Bs, T65As, T99s, and T137s in our area for extended periods. In some respects, these are our new "resident" orca pods. These apex predators are thriving.

Humpback Whales

The humpback whale is a species of baleen whale, and has a distinctive body shape, with long pectoral fins and a knobby head. It is known for breaching and other distinctive surface behaviors. One of the larger whale species, adults range in length from 39–52 feet and weigh nearly 40 tons. Humpbacks feed in polar waters, and migrate to tropical or subtropical waters to breed and give birth. Their diet consists mostly of krill and small fish. Until commercial whaling was banned in 1996, humpbacks were nearly hunted to extinction. Their population has rebounded, however, and we are thrilled to have them back in our neighborhood. This summer, humpbacks "Shell", "Meqe", "Sandstorm", "Valiant", "Yogi", and "Scuttle" have been in residence, displaying impressive breaching behaviors.

Gray Whales

The gray whale is a species of baleen whale, with a dark slate-gray color, and frequently covered by gray/white scars left by parasites which drop off in its cold feeding grounds. Adults range in length from 43–49 feet and weigh up to 40 tons. Each spring, gray whales migrate from the southern waters near Baja, north to Alaska. In Washington, gray whales were once thought to be strictly seasonal travelers along the outer coast. We now know that these waters are more than just a stop on a migratory route for some. A small group of Grays nicknamed "Sounders" often turn east into Washington's inland waters, usually during the spring northern migra-

tion. This summer, we've had the pleasure of spending extended time with gray whales CRC2356, CRC2259, and CRC2262.

Minke Whales

The elusive minke whale is among the smallest of the baleen whales. Minkes range in length from 23-33 feet and weigh up to 10 tons. They migrate seasonally from polar feeding grounds to equatorial waters, where they breed and calve. Minkes feed on small schooling fish, crustaceans, and plankton. We don't have cataloged names for minke whales, but this summer has been a big year for minke sightings, which confirms that they are finding plenty to eat in the Salish Sea.

Family-run Puget Sound Express offers whale watching tours out of Port Townsend from March – October each year, with both half-day and full-day excursions. Our Family - Pete, Sherri, Christopher and Sarah - hope you and your family are healthy and safe, and we thank you for your spirit of adventure. The Sound is ever changing and powerful, and the wildlife still quiets our soul in wonder.



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ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES



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Place label here



more information on this program, please contact:
Karen Best (karen@karenbest.com)
Chamber President or Arlene Alen
(director@jeffcountychamber.org)
Chamber Executive Director.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the
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CELEBRATING 60 YEARS



Due to the COVID-19 crisis, many events of our Chamber members as well as the Chamber have been postponed to future dates. Please check the Chamber Website for details and frequent updates:
www.jeffcountychamber.org/events

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