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# The Leader

(/)  
Wednesday, April 6, 2022



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MAIN MENU



## Continuing driver shortages, route limitations raise concerns for transport services in Chimacum School District

Posted Friday, February 4, 2022 10:34 am

**Leader News Staff**  
[news@ptleader.com](mailto:news@ptleader.com) (mailto:news@ptleader.com)

In a time when school bus drivers are at a premium, Chimacum Schools Superintendent Scott Mauk reached out to Jefferson Transit Authority with a proposition: Could they possibly pitch in to help get kids where they needed to go?

But the simple question has a complicated answer.

Discussion around bussing emerged at Chimacum School District's latest board meeting, Jan. 26.

Frustration among staff was apparent in response to a comment made by Mauk.

"Just got word from Jefferson Transit that they can't help us with our transportation issues," he said. "They are interpreting the law so that they can't compete with private charter companies."

A followup call with Mauk clarified the intent behind his earlier statement.

"I don't think we want to take something from [the] current ridership," he said. "We reached out to see if they could cover some of our runs."

"Our team got hammered," he said of bus drivers contracting COVID.

"We've been running buses for sports, back and forth from Chimacum," he added. "It's been rough."

That sentiment was seconded by Nicole Gauthier, fixed route operations manager for Jefferson Transit.

In an email to The Leader, Gauthier wrote: "The pandemic has been especially hard on all transportation entities and Jefferson Transit Authority is no exception. Jefferson Transit has been working hard to maintain the highest level of service for the community while being short staffed."

Legally, the transit authority is limited in what they can do for local schools.

Mauk was hoping for different routes, stops, or pickup times to assist with student schedules, but Gauthier explained why Jefferson Transit cannot accommodate that request.

"The law that dictates how transit agencies compete with privately owned bus companies can be found under the Federal Transit Administrations Charter Service Regulations (49 CFR, Part 604)," she wrote.

Essentially, this law states that when federal funds are used to buoy mass transit systems, the funding comes with parameters about how public transit can be used, and how such systems can work – or not – with charter buses.

"Jefferson Transit Authority has offered to work with the school district to assist with scheduling and trip planning for students utilizing JTA's existing routes," Gauthier added.

But Mauk says that doesn't help them much right now.

Existing times and stops for routes don't sync with most students' schedules.

He's hoping, at least, that something can be worked out to transport low-income students.

"What the board would like to do is have a seat at the transit table," he said.

In the meantime, Jefferson Transit is currently accepting applications for another driver, while Chimacum is seeking two bus drivers and one substitute.

## Comments

NO COMMENTS ON THIS ITEM   ADD YOUR COMMENT

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## OTHER ITEMS THAT MAY INTEREST YOU

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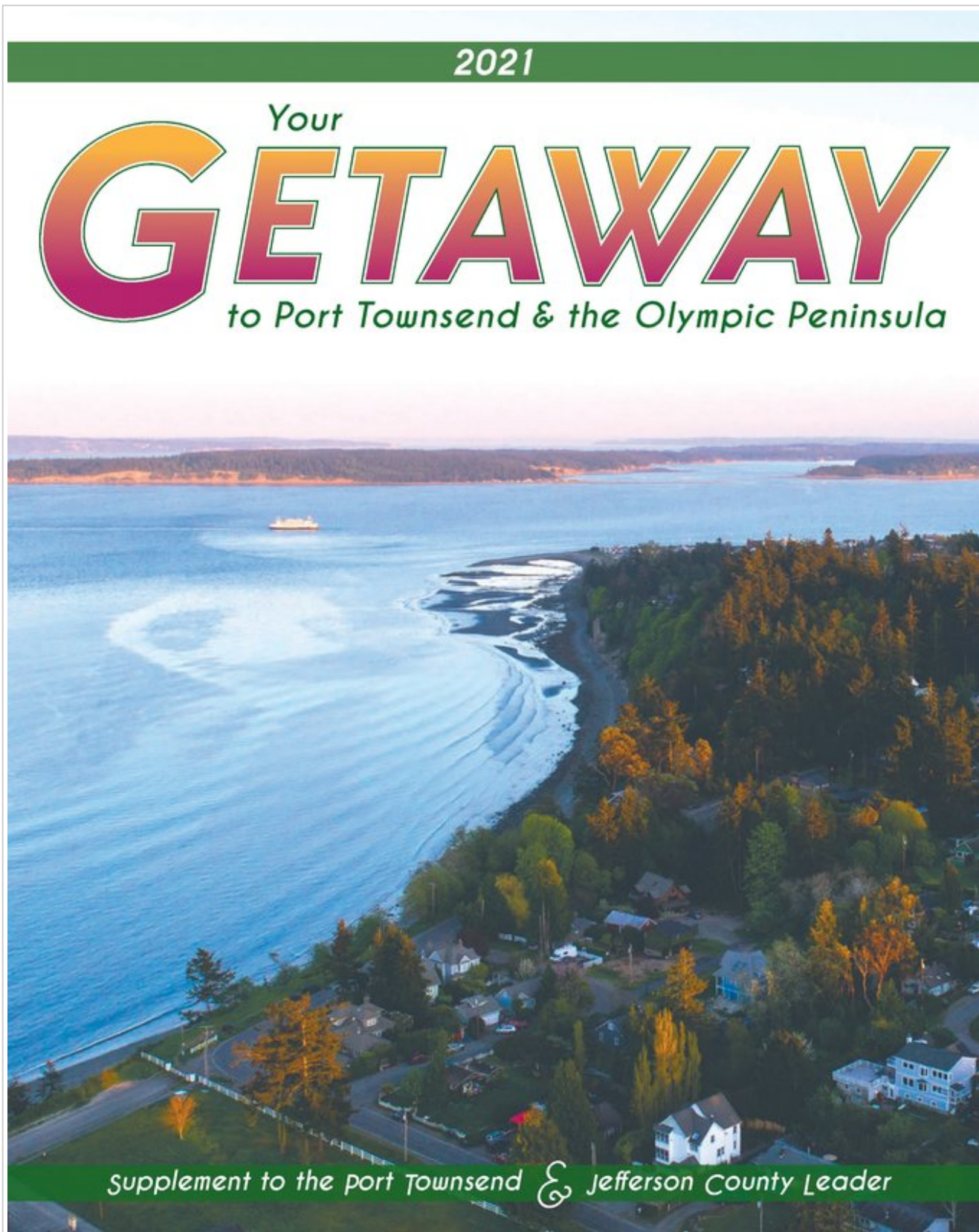
**Home destroyed by blaze at Glendale Farm (/stories/home-destroyed-by-blaze-at-glendale-arm,81891)**

**Jefferson County Sheriff's Log | Somebody pitched a tent (/stories/jefferson-county-sheriffs-log-somebody-pitched-a-tent,81736)**

**College Board of Trustees meets in Port Townsend (/stories/college-board-of-trustees-meets-in-port-townsend,81890)**

**Registration starts for free legal aid clinic (/stories/registration-starts-for-free-legal-aid-clinic,81889)**

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</stories/getaway-2021,75216>

## **Getaway Guide 2021** (</stories/getaway-2021,75216>)

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## LATEST NEWS



### Home destroyed by blaze at Glendale Farm (/stories/home-destroyed-by-blaze-at-glendale-farm,81891)

An early morning fire destroyed a single-family home on Glendale Farm in Chimacum Saturday. The home was fully engulfed in flames and had already collapsed when firefighters from East Jefferson ...

</stories/home-destroyed-by-blaze-at-glendale-farm,81891>)



### Jefferson County Sheriff's Log | Somebody pitched a tent (/stories/jefferson-county-sheriffs-log-somebody-pitched-a-tent,81736)

Jefferson County Sheriff's Office received 213 calls for service between Friday, Feb. 18 and Friday, Feb. 25. Below are selected reports. At 5:16 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 20 in Port Hadlock, a ...

</stories/jefferson-county-sheriffs-log-somebody-pitched-a-tent,81736>)

### College Board of Trustees meets in Port Townsend (/stories/college-board-of-trustees-meets-in-port-townsend,81890)

The next regularly scheduled hybrid meeting of the Peninsula College Board of Trustees will be held virtually at 2 p.m. Friday, April 22, at the PC Port Townsend Building 202 campus at Fort ...



PENINSULA COLLEGE

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PORT TOWNSEND & JEFFERSON COUNTY

# The Leader

April 6, 2022  
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FARMERS MARKET OPENS SEASON A2 • NEW NEIGHBORHOOD IN PT APPROVED A3 • KITCHEN TO KITCHEN B2

## 'VERY COMPLICATED' FIREFIGHT



A drone photo shows a Chimacum dwelling engulfed by flames Saturday. East Jefferson Fire Chief Bret Black said firefighters faced access issues and a lack of water supply. Photo courtesy of the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office.

## Home destroyed by blaze at Glendale Farm

BRANK KOLLY  
BKOLLY@PTLEADER.COM

An early morning fire destroyed a single-family home on Glendale Farm in Chimacum Saturday.

The home was fully engulfed in flames and had already collapsed when firefighters from East Jefferson Fire Rescue arrived at the property on Center Road around 3 a.m. April 2 after a structure fire was reported, said East Jefferson Fire Chief Bret Black.

"We quickly realized it would need more resources and we paged out mutual aid resources from Quilcene and Bonanza and Port Ludlow," Black said.

Engine 91 from Naval Magazine Island also responded to the fire.

Rattling the fire posed problems due to the cluttered nature of the property, with piles of debris scattered about the average, as well as multiple displaced vehicles and RVs.

"Our major challenges were access and a lack of water supply," Black said, adding that the county's help was essential in getting firefighters close to the blaze.

County roads crews brought in two excavators to move debris out of the way.

Extra water trucks were called in, the chief said, and fire lines had to be

stretched to the road.

The single-story home was a total loss.

"When we got there, it was already collapsed. It was a very fast fire," he said.

The resident of the home made it out OK with some minor injuries, the chief said, and the person was treated by an aid unit but declined to be transported.

Two other residents on the property, and their dog, escaped injury and were being assisted by the Red Cross with housing.

The cause of the fire remains under investigation, but Black said it was not suspicious.

With the structure already engulfed at the arrival time of first-in units, firefighters took up a defensive posture and worked to keep the fire from spreading.

Black estimated at least 19 emergency vehicles were at the fire at the peak time of the response.

Firefighters remained on the scene throughout Saturday, and have made return visits to guard against potential flare-ups.

"We're still going out there periodically for smoke and smoldering areas," Black said.

"We were out there extensively for at least 24 hours," he said. "And, unfortunately going up, and now, just to make sure we really got it out."

The emergency response left some drivers in the area temporarily stranded.

Highway 19 and Center Road were shut down because of the blaze just before 6:30 a.m., with Center Road finally reopening just before 3 p.m. Saturday.

Scorching flames from the fire were easily visible from Center Road, and the large plume of white and gray smoke could be seen for miles.

Neighbors said Glendale Farm, located near the 400 block of Center Road, has been the site of repeated fires in the past.

The devastating fire Saturday was also noted during Monday's meeting of the board of county commissioners. "It was a hard weekend in District 2," said Commissioner Heidi Kierhenow.

She praised firefighters and county employees for their assistance at a "very complicated fire."

In addition to county public works crews, employees from the county's Department of Community Development also went to the scene to help.

Black said Monday he welcomed the assistance from the county during the fire, which was the latest example of collaboration between the two entities.

"It's really been appreciated," Black said.

## ATM wins in tug-of-war with bank thieves

### Suspects flee after plan goes awry

JAMES SLAN  
JSLAN@PTLEADER.COM

Three thieves tried to make an unauthorized withdrawal from the Chase Bank in Port Townsend but ended up making a direct deposit instead.

Police are investigating a recent theft attempt at the bank branch on Kearney Street, where three thieves tried to steal the ATM on the property by hammering away at its housing and then trying to pull the machine out of its shelter with a truck.

There was a hitch, however.

The truck lost its taillight assembly from the right rear driver's side during the attempted theft, and police responding to the scene found pieces of the truck in the bank parking lot, along with the hammer and chain used in the crime.



Photographed on Thursday, March 21, Chase Bank's ATM machine has since been removed after the attempted theft. An ATM temporarily closed sign was put up inside the cover shelter. Leader photo by James Slan.

The malicious failure happened sometime between 4:50 and 5:01 a.m. Thursday, March 24, according to a case report from the Port Townsend Police Department.

see ATM, Page A6

## Ballots go out for Quilcene election

### Commissioners offer support for Prop. 1

BRANK KOLLY  
BKOLLY@PTLEADER.COM

Jefferson County commissioners threw their support behind the Quilcene School District's second shot at a 20-year bond to pay for a new elementary school.

At their meeting Monday, commissioners unanimously approved a resolution to support the \$12.3 million bond measure.

The proposal will be on the ballot for a special election Tuesday, April 26.

Proposition 1 needs 60 percent approval from voters to pass, an identical bond measure in February narrowly fell to defeat, with a "yes" vote of 59.4 percent.

Quilcene School Superintendent Frank Redmon outlined Prop. 1 to commissioners Monday, and noted it would replace the existing grade school building, construct a new Career and Technical Education Building, and make athletic facilities and field improvements at the Quilcene campus.

"We're trying to accomplish three things with our bond," Redmon told the board.

That includes rebuilding the elementary school, building a career and technical education space, and addressing long-standing issues with Quilcene's athletic facilities and fields.

"We've been looking at this for a long time. Two options with superintendents and ourselves — from as many as 20 years ago — and they said that this is long coming," Redmon told commissioners. "It's an issue that has needed to be addressed since the '90s."

He noted the elementary school was built in 1946, with an addition in 1948.

"It's an aging structure and it's built for a type of education that doesn't exist anymore," Redmon said, praising maintenance staff for keeping the building up and teachers for creating a warm and welcoming space for students.

Quilcene needs to rethink how education is done, he added.

see ELECTION, Page A9

## Sweet and sour: Survey respondents give mixed feedback on long-term streateries

JAMES SLAN  
JSLAN@PTLEADER.COM

Base at home.

A new survey shows locals have love-hate views about Port Townsend's streateries, the food kiosks or open-air places that have been on city streets since the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Results from the online poll, conducted by Port Townsend Main Street, were announced at Monday's city council meeting.

Some folks favored the structures for their picnic focus and other benefits, while others said the structures are an eyesore and a safety hazard.

Results showed that 63.6 percent of respondents supported making streateries and parklets permanent fixtures in Port Townsend.

A total of 36.4 percent were opposed to keeping the structures in place.

Many of those who took the poll and provided written

comments struck the same chord: They were ugly and took away needed street parking, or they were nice amenities that also limited the amount of vehicles on downtown streets.

When asked if they had dined in a Port Townsend eatery in the past two years, the numbers were almost identical to those that tried to gauge support for permanent streateries.

A total of 63.5 percent of respondents said they had dined in a streatery, while 36.5 percent said they hadn't.

"We would use [streateries] more if improved (and more nice ones built). Outdoor eating preferred, give us great weather and limiting COVID variants," wrote one respondent.

"Our climate makes these spaces unappealing and uncomfortable for dining," added another. "I feel that improving the streateries would simply allow businesses to spread beyond their walls and take away valuable parking

see SURVEY, Page A9

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A blue banner for a 'DRUG TAKE BACK' event. At the top, it says 'DRUG TAKE BACK' in large white letters, followed by 'APRIL 30, 2022 10AM-2PM'. Below this is an illustration of six diverse people of various ages and abilities (one in a wheelchair) holding up a large white banner. The text on the banner reads: 'LET'S WORK TOGETHER TO PROTECT YOU PEOPLE, FAMILIES, AND THE ENVIRONMENT!'. Below that, it says 'BRING YOUR UNUSED OR EXPIRED MEDICATIONS FOR NO QUESTIONS ASKED, ANONYMOUS, SAFE DISPOSAL!'. On the right side, there is a white circle containing the text '3 LOCATIONS' and a list: 'QFC in Port Hadlock', 'Fire Station in Quilcene', and 'QFC in Port Townsend'.

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