

COMMISSIONER MEETINGS

All meetings take place in the Commissioners Conference Room (308)
located in the Ostlund Building @ 2825 3rd Ave N (3rd Floor)
and are open to the public unless otherwise noted

TUESDAY - JUNE 30, 2026

10:00 COMMISSIONERS DISCUSSION

PLEDGE

DEPARTMENTS

1. IT -
 - a. Temporary Re-Assignment of Network Duties to Team Members While Short Staffed
 - b. Department Role Restructuring
2. **County Attorney** - HEART Grant
3. **Aaron Felder** - NWE Power Plant

COMMISSIONERS

1. Ostlund Building Security
2. Board Recommendation - Aaron Kind to Historic Preservation Board
3. Commissioner Board Reports

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON COUNTY BUSINESS

**Public comment is an opportunity for individuals to address the Board, however, the Board cannot engage in discussion or take action on items not properly noticed on the agenda. Public comment is limited to 3 minutes per individual.*

CLOSED: Data Center Initiative

CLOSED: Health Insurance

Meeting Date: 06/30/2026

Title: Temporary Increase for added duties

Submitted For: Larry Ziler, IT Director

Submitted By: Larry Ziler, IT Director

TOPIC:

Temporary Re-Assignment of Network Duties to Team Members While Short Staffed

BACKGROUND:

The department recently experienced the unexpected departure of a network team member on June 22nd and our senior Network Administrator on June 29th. These back-to-back vacancies leave a significant gap in our ability to maintain and support County network infrastructure.

To sustain operations during this period, I am requesting authorization to assign expanded network responsibilities — beyond the scope of their current roles — to Tyler Helmbrecht and Jerrod Montelongo. These individuals will be asked to perform at a mid- to senior-level capacity on a temporary basis while we actively work to fill both vacancies. We anticipate a recruitment timeline of approximately three to five weeks.

In recognition of the additional duties and elevated expectations placed on each employee, I am requesting the following temporary compensation adjustments:

- Tyler Helmbrecht — a 15% temporary increase to his current salary, reflecting a greater share of the expanded responsibilities during the transition period and due to his existing network experience and knowledge. This represents an additional approximately \$649 per month.
- Jerrod Montelongo — a 10% temporary increase to his current salary, reflecting a supporting role as he develops familiarity with the additional duties. This represents an additional approximately \$480 per month.

The combined additional payroll cost is approximately \$1,129 per month, and both adjustments would remain in effect only for the duration of the temporary assignment. These figures fall within the established salary range of the IT Engineer position that was recently vacated (\$62,200 – \$87,900), providing a basis for the requested increases.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

I recommend the following temporary pay increases.

Tyler Helmbrecht — a 15% temporary increase to his current salary, reflecting a greater share of the expanded responsibilities during the transition period and due to his existing network experience and knowledge. This represents an additional approximately \$649 per month. • Jerrod Montelongo — a 10% temporary increase to his current salary, reflecting a supporting role as he develops familiarity with the additional duties. This represents an additional approximately \$480 per month.

B.O.C.C Thursday Discussion

1. b.

Meeting Date: 06/30/2026

Title: IT Department Restructure - Phase 2

Submitted For: Larry Ziler, IT Director

Submitted By: Larry Ziler, IT Director

TOPIC:

Department Role Restructuring

BACKGROUND:

Efforts to Improve the Value Provided to Yellowstone County by the Information Technology Department Continue with the Overall Goal of Being Effective and Cost-Efficient in our Efforts. I have identified an opportunity to cut costs, improve the County's technology posture, and continue the skill development of our IT team members. My proposal is to implement additional role restructuring within my department. The IT Department has a budget for thirteen team members, of which one has been vacant for the past year. I've not pursued the Assistant IT Director position during my first year as IT Director while I learned about and evaluated the department and the County needs. It is my opinion this role could be dropped in favor of developing specialized technical and leadership roles within the department. I propose to eliminate the Assistant Director position and instead create multiple specialized IT roles in the department to address the gaps in our technology system management. Ultimately, we would hire an additional entry level support team member to bring IT to it's full capacity of thirteen FTEs, create four new job descriptions providing specialized roles to manage County technology, encourage longevity of County employees in IT and other departments, improve pay for individual IT team members, and cut IT Salary expense by nearly \$25,000 over the current budget.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

I recommend the BOCC approve moving forward with creation and review of four new, specialized job descriptions by IT with the assistance of HR and the Hay Committee to confirm pay scales and evaluate cost savings as an alternative to the Assistant IT Director position.

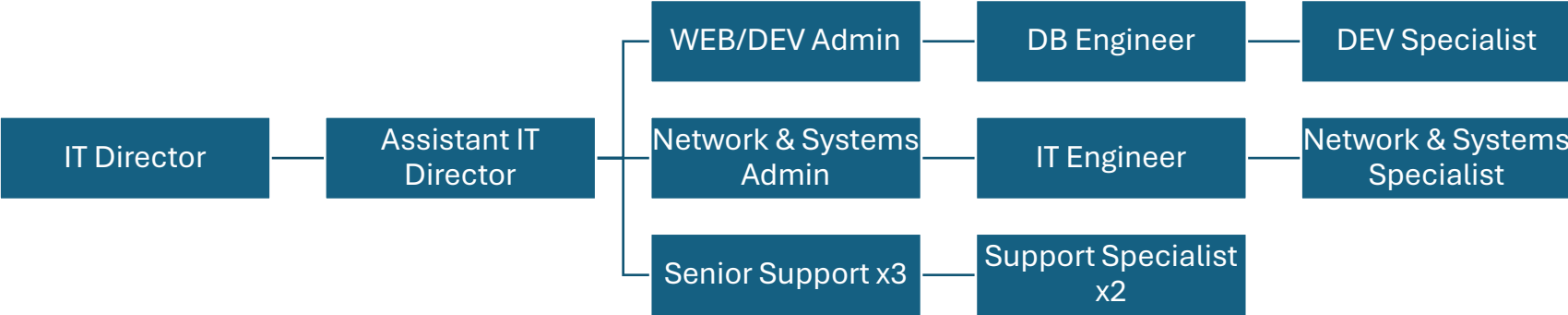
Attachments

IT Org Structure

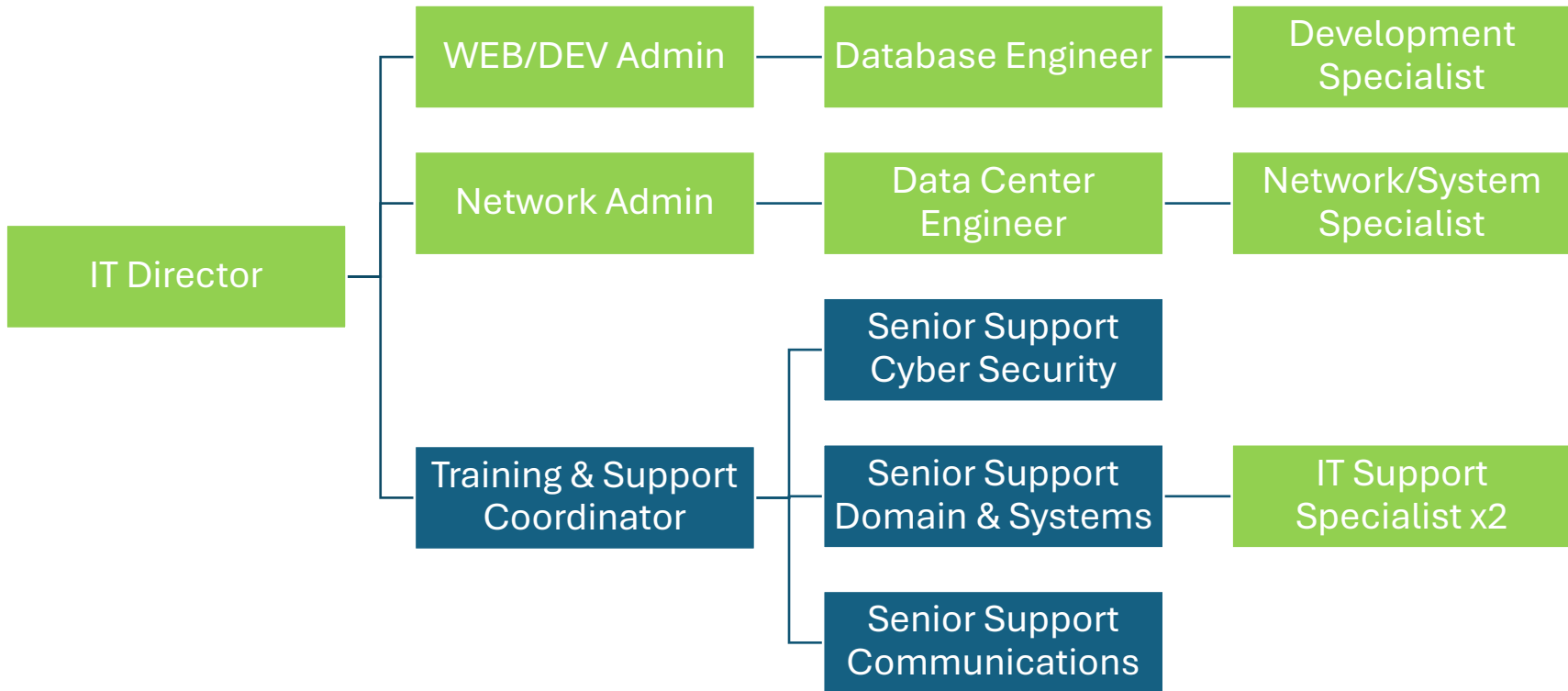
1-Page Proposal Summary

Full Proposal

Current IT Org Structure



Proposed IT Org Structure



IT Department Restructuring

Proposal Highlights | Yellowstone County, Montana

FOUR CORE OBJECTIVES

- Deliver higher-quality, specialized technical services to County departments and constituents.
- Strengthen the County's cybersecurity posture through dedicated, proactive security management.
- Invest in employees through a structured technical training program that builds skills and longevity.
- Align roles with individual strengths and create defined career pathways to support retention and growth.

WHAT IS CHANGING

- The vacant Assistant IT Director position (Class J) is eliminated — a generalist leadership role replaced by specialized capability at the team level.
- A Support & Training Coordinator (Class H) is introduced to lead the support team, manage service metrics, coordinate workloads, and own incident response.
- Senior Support roles are redefined with four specializations: Domain & Systems, Cyber Security, Applications, and Communications.
- A Senior Support Generalist role is established as a stepping-stone for high-performing Support Specialists working toward a specialty.
- A new Support Specialist (Class E) is hired to fill the open slot — maintaining 13 total positions with no net increase in headcount.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY

Support Specialist → Senior Support Generalist → Senior Support Specialist

A transparent advancement track that rewards talent, develops expertise, and keeps skilled employees within the County.

BUDGET REAPPORTIONING AT A GLANCE

Position Change	Class	Est. Impact
Eliminate Assistant IT Director (vacant)	J	-\$98,384
Support & Training Coordinator promotion +5%	H	+\$5,670
3× Senior Support Specialist +5% for added duties	G	+\$11,942
New Support Specialist hired at Class E	E	+\$56,178
Net Annual Savings		-\$24,594

All figures are midpoint salary estimates with FY26 rates. They do not include benefits and other compensation. Final compensation is subject to role classification.

The restructuring adds specialized capability, promotes from within, compensates employees for expanded duties, and returns an estimated \$24,594 in annual savings — all within the existing 13-position structure.

Information Technology Department Restructuring Proposal

Presented to the Board of County Commissioners
Yellowstone County, Montana

Executive Summary

The Yellowstone County Information Technology Department currently operates with 12 filled positions and one open position, totaling 13 roles across a generalized structure. While the team has served the County well, the evolving demands of modern government IT — from cybersecurity threats to increasingly complex infrastructure — require a more deliberate and specialized organizational design.

This proposal presents a two-stage restructuring of the IT Department designed to achieve four core objectives:

- Deliver higher-quality, more specialized technical services to County departments and constituents.
- Strengthen the County's cybersecurity posture through proactive, dedicated security management.
- Invest in County employees through a structured technical training program that builds skills and promotes longevity.
- Align roles and responsibilities with the individual strengths of IT team members, creating defined career development pathways that support retention and professional growth.

Current Structure

The current IT organization is structured in three functional branches reporting to the IT Director: a Web and Development branch, a Network and Infrastructure branch, and a Support branch. The department's 13 positions (12 filled, 1 open) are distributed across these branches as follows:

Web & Development Branch

- WEB/DEV Administrator
- Database Engineer

- Development Specialist

Network & Infrastructure Branch

- Network Administrator
- IT Engineer
- Network Specialist

Support Branch

- Senior Support (×3)
- Support Specialist (×2)

Leadership

- IT Director
- Assistant IT Director (vacant but budgeted)

While this structure has provided a functional foundation, the generalized nature of the support tier limits the department's ability to develop deep expertise, respond proactively to emerging threats, and offer employees a clear path for career advancement.

Proposed Structure

The proposed Stage Two structure preserves the existing Web & Development and Network & Infrastructure branches while significantly evolving the Support branch. A new Support & Training Coordinator role is introduced to lead the support team, and Senior Support roles are redefined with specialized focus areas. The open position will be utilized to complete this restructuring without requiring new headcount.

New & Redefined Roles

Support & Training Coordinator

The Support & Training Coordinator serves as the operational lead of the IT Support team, bridging day-to-day technical support with strategic service management. This role collaborates directly with the IT Director to define the metrics, processes, and procedures that guide the support team, while monitoring service trends to identify recurring issues or emerging training needs. The Coordinator manages workload distribution, leads the lifecycle management of laptop and desktop inventory, and

serves as the primary incident commander during critical IT events — ensuring timely resolution and clear communication with stakeholders. Additionally, this role works cross-functionally with systems administrators, network engineers, and developers to resolve complex issues, and acts as a working backup during high-volume or understaffed periods.

Senior Support: Domain & Systems Specialist

The Senior Support Domain & Systems Specialist focuses on the County's workstation environment and domain infrastructure. This role provides advanced technical support for hardware, software, and operating environments; installs, configures, and maintains workstations, peripherals, and network equipment; and enforces County policies on system access, data integrity, and security. The Specialist also deploys client applications, troubleshoots complex hardware and software failures including data recovery, and serves as a backup and resource to other support team members.

Senior Support: Cyber Security Specialist

The Senior Support Cyber Security Specialist is a dedicated role focused on the protection of County systems, data, and users. Responsibilities include monitoring security dashboards, alerts, and logs to identify and investigate potential threats; supporting vulnerability management through scanning, tracking, and coordinating remediation; and maintaining endpoint protection, email security, and identity and access controls. This role also leads cybersecurity awareness efforts including training materials and phishing simulations, maintains compliance and incident records, and collaborates with infrastructure and support teams to ensure consistent enforcement of security controls across the organization.

Senior Support: Application Specialist

The Senior Support Application Specialist provides focused technical support for the County's line-of-business and standard software applications. This role installs, configures, and maintains application environments; diagnoses and resolves software-related issues for end users; and enforces County policies on system access and data integrity. The Specialist also designs and tests client application deployments, researches peripheral compatibility, and serves as a resource and backup to other members of the support team.

Senior Support: Communications Specialist

The Senior Support Communications Specialist focuses on the County's communications infrastructure and user-facing technology. This role supports end users with hardware, software, and communications platform issues; installs and maintains

related equipment and configurations according to department standards; and enforces County data access and security policies. The Specialist also assists in diagnosing and resolving cross-platform connectivity issues and serves as a backup to other Senior Support team members.

Senior Support: Generalist

The Senior Support Generalist is a developmental role designed to bridge the gap between the Support Specialist and the specialized Senior Support tracks. This position is intended for high-performing Support Specialists who demonstrate the skills and qualifications for advancement but have not yet been assigned a primary specialization. The Generalist role allows the IT Director to assess and develop an individual's strengths before placement into a focused specialty, ensuring the right people are in the right roles while providing a clear and attainable path for career growth within the department.

Benefits of the Proposed Restructuring

The Stage Two restructuring represents a meaningful investment in the long-term effectiveness of Yellowstone County's IT Department and the employees who serve it. By introducing specialized roles within the support tier, the County gains a team capable of delivering deeper expertise across critical domains — including cybersecurity, systems administration, application support, and communications — rather than relying on generalists to address an ever-widening range of technical demands.

The creation of a dedicated Cyber Security Specialist role is particularly significant. As cyber threats to local government continue to grow in frequency and sophistication, having a team member whose primary focus is threat monitoring, vulnerability management, and security awareness positions the County to respond proactively rather than reactively — reducing risk, supporting compliance requirements, and protecting constituent data.

The introduction of the Support & Training Coordinator formalizes service management within the department, bringing structure to workload distribution, incident response, and end-user training. This improves service quality for all County departments while freeing the IT Director to focus on strategic initiatives.

Perhaps most importantly, this restructuring establishes a transparent career development pathway for IT staff. The progression from Support Specialist to Senior Support Generalist to Senior Support Specialist gives employees a defined trajectory for growth within the County — an investment that pays dividends in staff retention, institutional knowledge, and morale. In an era when skilled IT professionals are in high

demand, building a department where talented employees can envision a long-term career is one of the most cost-effective strategies available to local government.

This proposal does not require new headcount beyond the County's existing 13-position structure. It is a thoughtful reallocation of roles and responsibilities designed to maximize the impact of the team already in place.

Budget Reapportioning

This restructuring does not require a new budget appropriation. Instead, it proposes a strategic reapportioning of existing personnel budget — eliminating the vacant Assistant IT Director position and redistributing those funds to compensate employees for expanded responsibilities, promote from within, and add a frontline Support Specialist.

The following table summarizes the estimated annual salary impact of the proposed changes, using midpoint figures for each classification range:

Position Change	Class	Est. Annual Impact
Eliminate Assistant IT Director (vacant)	J	-\$98,384
Support & Training Coordinator — promotion + 5%	H	+\$5,670
3× Senior Support Specialist — 5% for added duties	G	+\$11,942
New Support Specialist — fill open position	E	+\$56,178
Net Annual Change		-\$24,594

The elimination of the Assistant IT Director vacancy — a Class J position with an estimated midpoint salary of \$98,384 — generates sufficient savings to fund the Support & Training Coordinator promotion, compensate three Senior Support Specialists for their expanded and specialized duties, and hire an additional Support Specialist, while still yielding an estimated net annual savings of \$24,594.

All figures above represent midpoint salary estimates based on current Yellowstone County classification ranges and are provided for planning purposes only. Final compensation determinations for any reclassified or newly created positions will be subject to review and approval by the Hay Committee.

Submitted for consideration by the Yellowstone County Board of County Commissioners.

B.O.C.C Thursday Discussion

2.

Meeting Date: 06/30/2026

Title: HEART grant

Submitted For: Melissa Williams, Deputy County Attorney

Submitted By: Melissa Williams, Deputy County Attorney

TOPIC:

County Attorney - HEART Grant

BACKGROUND:

On June 19, 2026 the HEART grant contracts were extended for an additional year. The County anticipated the HEART program would move to direct billing. With the short notice provided by the State, the County must discuss HEART grant services.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Agenda Item

B.O.C.C Thursday Discussion

3.

Meeting Date: 06/30/2026

Title: Aaron Felder - NWE Power Plant

Submitted By: Erika Guy

TOPIC:

Aaron Felder - NWE Power Plant

BACKGROUND:

Discuss

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Discuss

Attachments

NWE Presentation

Fingerprints

Every one of us have our own fingerprints and DNA. If we look at the data that I have brought, you will see Northwestern Energy's fingerprints.

Please recall the Northwestern Energy Handout that I gave to each of you at the May 19th county commissioner meeting. The handout shows the words that NWE used to detail their impacts to the area surrounding the Yellowstone Generating Station. My home is 2300 feet away and according to NWE's handout their sound goes 600' off their land and into the river and DROPS. This is not so. Also, the handout said that their sound doesn't leave their property. This is not so.





Class 1 noise monitor to IEC 61672-1 (IEC 61672-1 is the international standard that defines the electroacoustical performance specifications for sound level meters)

This noise monitor is considered a defensible monitor. We have this monitor installed on our property.

Most sound level meters and dosimeters use built-in frequency filters or "weighting networks " in the measurement process. By far the most frequently used filter is the A weighting network, which discriminates against low-frequency and very high-frequency sounds. A weighting approximates the equal-loudness response of the ear at moderate sound levels, and correlates well with both hearing damage and annoyance from noise.

A small increase in decibels can represent a large increase in sound energy. Technically, an increase of 3 dB represents a doubling of sound energy, and an increase of 10 dB represents a tenfold increase. The ear, however, perceives a 10-dB increase as doubling of loudness.

WHAT ARE WE LOOKING AT?

From what we can hear, feel and then see (using the sound monitor) NWE runs 40-50 Hz and even into kHz as well. Their noise range is 16, 20, 25 and 31.5 Hz and even lower. What does this look like?

First, what is Beta and what are the Hz we are experiencing?

Second, let's look at the sound data.

High Beta State of Brainwaves and Sound Elements

High Beta brainwaves (20–30 Hz) are associated with intense focus, problem-solving, and heightened alertness, but also with stress, anxiety, and mental chatter when prolonged.

What High Beta Means

High Beta is the upper end of the Beta frequency range (13–30 Hz) and is linked to **normal waking consciousness** with **heightened attention, logic, and critical reasoning**. It's common during:

- Active problem-solving or decision-making
- Concentrated work or learning
- Situations requiring quick responses

However, **elevated Beta** (often 20–30 Hz) can signal **stress, anxiety, restlessness, and an overactive “inner voice”**. Prolonged high Beta without relaxation can lead to mental fatigue and reduced creativity.

This would be like going to a heavy metal concert for hours.

Feeling 16 Hz- What it means and experience it

Feeling a sensation at **16 Hz** is likely due to **brainwave entrainment** – when external sound or vibration influences your brain’s electrical activity to match a specific frequency. At 16 Hz, your brain is in the **upper-mid beta range** (12–30 Hz), which is associated with **high alertness, rapid thinking, and intense focus**.

Why 16 Hz Feels “High” or “Wired”

- **Beta wave state:** 16 Hz sits in the mid-high beta band, which is active during **intense concentration, problem-solving, and competitive performance**. This is often described as a “sprint mode” of the brain – quick, sharp, and mentally powerful.
- **Cognitive activation:** At this frequency, your brain processes information faster, decision-making sharpens, and mental energy is high. This can feel like being “on top of your game” or mentally charged.
- **Entrainment effect:** If you’re exposed to 16 Hz tones (via binaural beats, isochronic tones, or infrasound), your brain may synchronize to this frequency, producing the sensation of heightened mental activity
- **Possible downsides:** Prolonged exposure can **cause mental fatigue or anxiety** if the brain stays in this high-beta state too long. **It’s also not suitable for sleep, as it’s too activating.**

Feeling 20 Hz- What it means

Feeling a **20 Hz** tone is unusual because it's at the **lower limit of human hearing** — a deep rumble you can often feel more than hear. At this frequency, sound waves have a very long wavelength (about 15,000 km) and low energy per cycle, so your ears may not register it clearly, but your body can still detect the vibration.

Why You Might “Feel” It

- **Infrasound sensation:** Below 20 Hz, you can't hear, but at sufficient intensity you can feel pressure or vibration in your chest, abdomen, or even bones. At 20 Hz, the sensation is often described as a **low, pulsing rumble** or a deep throb.
- **Physical resonance:** Some research suggests that frequencies near 18–20 Hz can resonate with body structures, such as the eyeball or chest cavity, potentially causing mild unease or visual disturbances.
- **Environmental sources:** Large machinery, wind turbines, earthquakes, or even certain musical instruments (like a heavy bass drum) can produce 20 Hz tones that you feel as much as hear.

20Hz

Brain and Neurological Context

20 Hz sits at the **upper edge of beta brainwave activity** (12–30 Hz). Beta waves are linked to alertness, focus, and problem-solving, but at the high end (around 20 Hz) they can cross into the **anxiety threshold**. This is why 20 Hz is sometimes called the “red line” for brain activation – below it, you’re still alert but not stressed; above it, stress and over-arousal can begin.

Safety and Comfort

- **Low risk:** 20 Hz is not inherently dangerous, but prolonged exposure to loud infrasound can cause discomfort, fatigue, or anxiety.
- **Caution:** If you notice persistent unease, dizziness, or visual disturbances when exposed to 20 Hz, it may be worth reducing exposure or identifying the source.

Understanding 31.5 Hz Frequency and Its Effects

31.5 Hz is a low-frequency tone that can be felt as vibration and is sometimes used in sound therapy, but it also falls into the category of low-frequency noise with potential health effects if exposure is intense or prolonged.

Potential Health Considerations

While 31.5 Hz is generally safe at comfortable listening levels, **low-frequency noise** (including infrasound) can have non-auditory effects if exposure is high-intensity or chronic.

- **Sleep disruption:** May cause restlessness or difficulty falling asleep in some people.
- **Discomfort:** Can induce unease, fatigue, or irritability in sensitive individuals.
- **Cardiovascular effects:** Some studies link chronic low-frequency noise to increased heart rate variability or stress responses.
- **Hearing safety:** Loud low-frequency tones can damage hearing if played at high volumes.
- **Bottom line:** 31.5 Hz is a low-frequency tone with both therapeutic potential and possible health effects depending on intensity and duration. At low volumes and short durations, it's generally safe; at high intensities or prolonged exposure, it can contribute to discomfort or other low-frequency noise-related effects.



QT800027

Outdoor

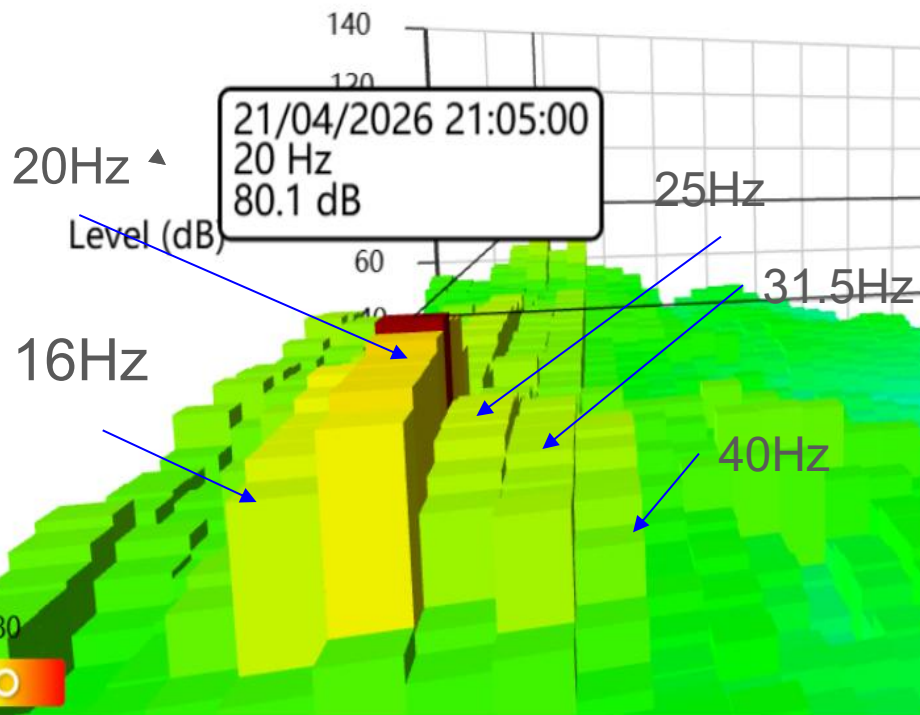


21/04/2026 - 21/04/2026

Week

Day

1:1 Octa



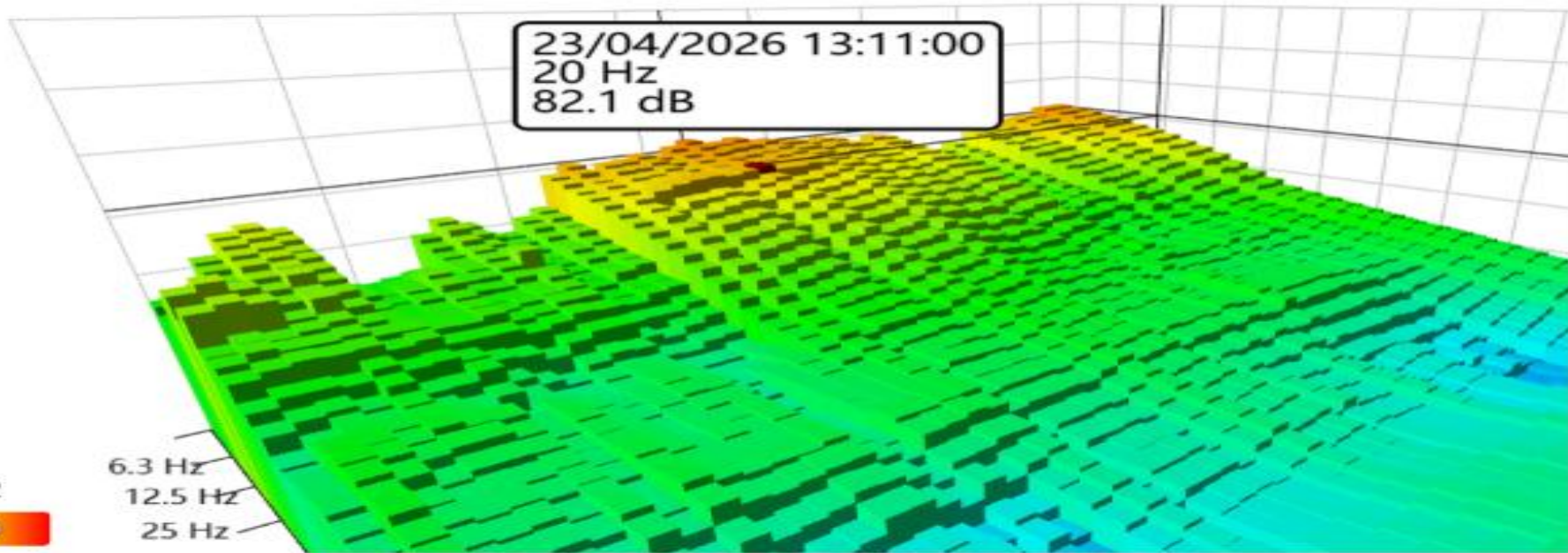
Testing done by NWE April the 23rd to morning of the 25th 2026

027



23/04/2026 - 23/04/2026

W



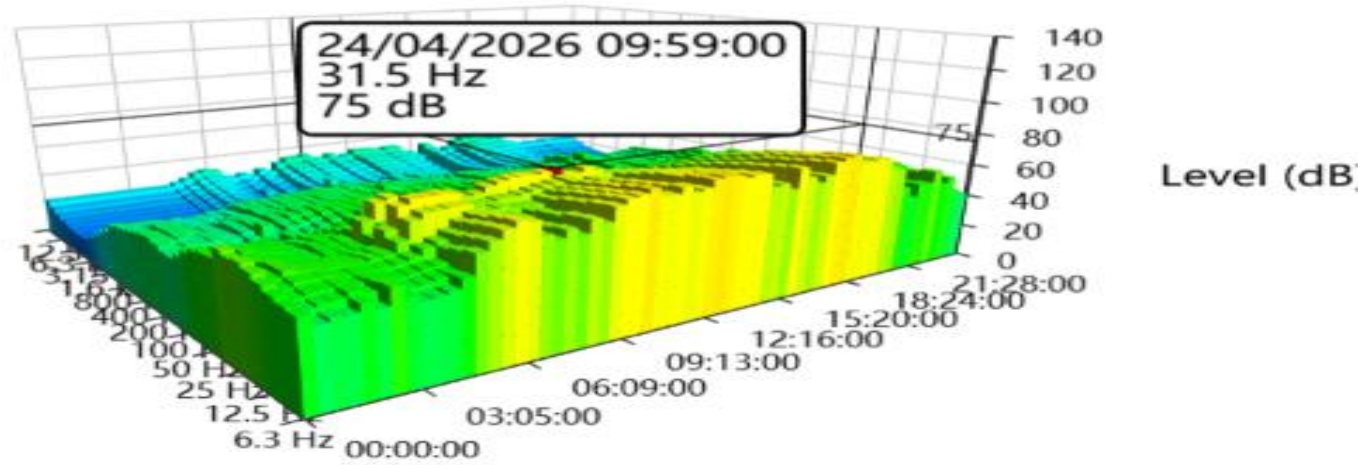
This day is a windy day but not as much as the day before (23rd).



24/04/2026 - 24/04/2026

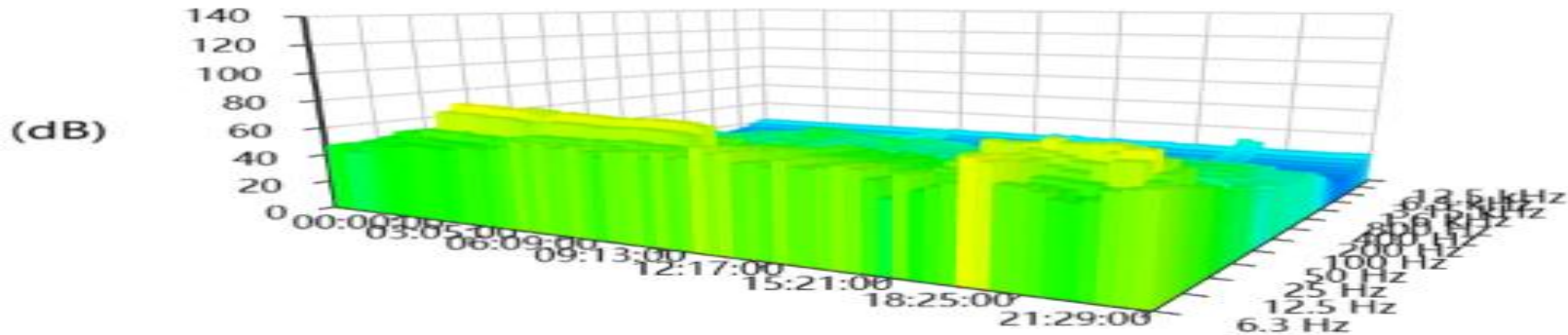
Week

Day



Last day of testing monitor was pulled that morning.

25/04/2026 - 25/04/2026 Week Day



← Details

They asked me if I heard it last night and I was woken up at 2:20 AM and that's what I told him, but I was able to go back to sleep. The equipment is gone.

Status

Received 4/25/26, 8:39 AM

Sent 4/25/26, 8:39 AM

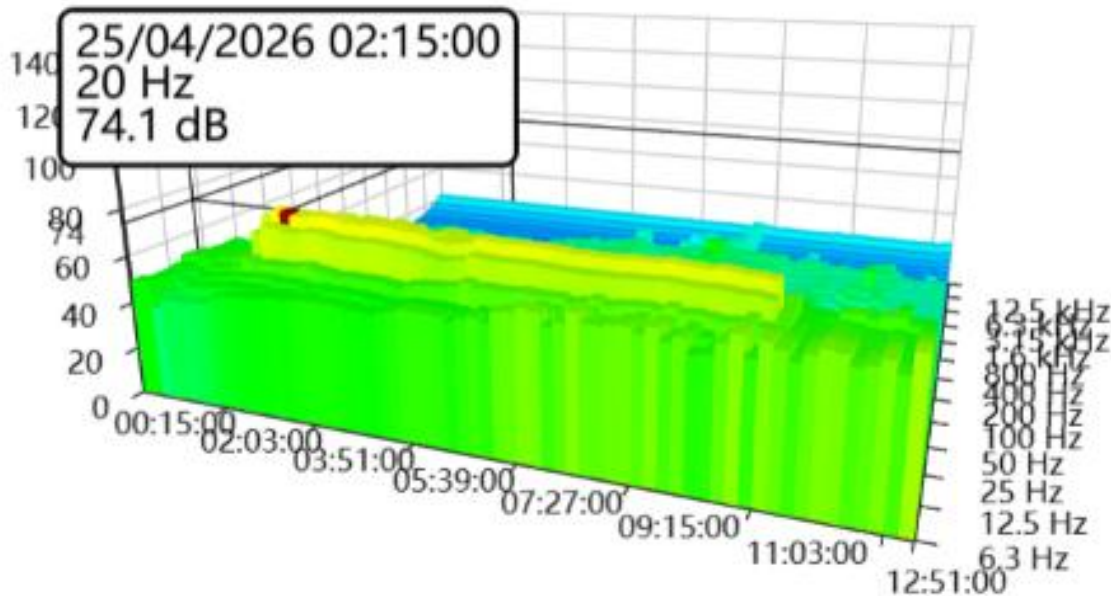
Type

Rich Communication Service Message



25/04/2026 - 25/04/2026

Week



Ripples

Nov 16th 2025



Highlights

Long exposure

Sunday, November 16, 2025 · 6:00 PM

20251116_180002.mp4

/Internal storage/DCIM/Camera

Edit

Galaxy S23+

48.63 MB | 1920x1080 | FHD

0:26 | HEVC | AAC | 30fps



Frequency Analysis



QT800027
Outdoor

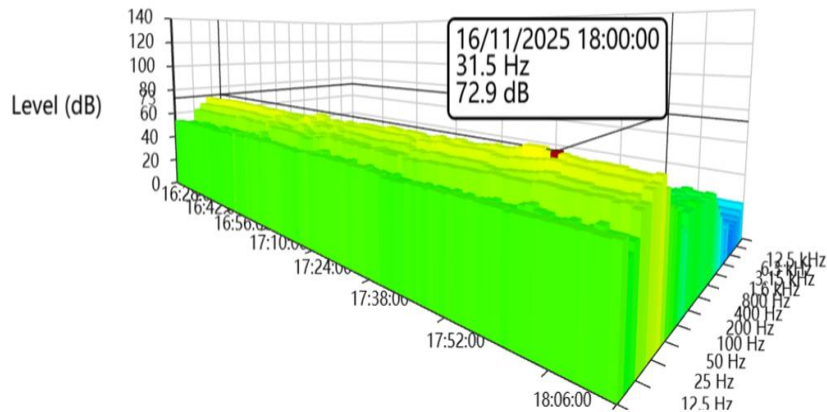
16/11/2025 - 16/11/2025

Week

Day

1:1 Octave

1:3 Octave





NWE drowns out all the good sound

Frequency Analysis



QT800027
Outdoor



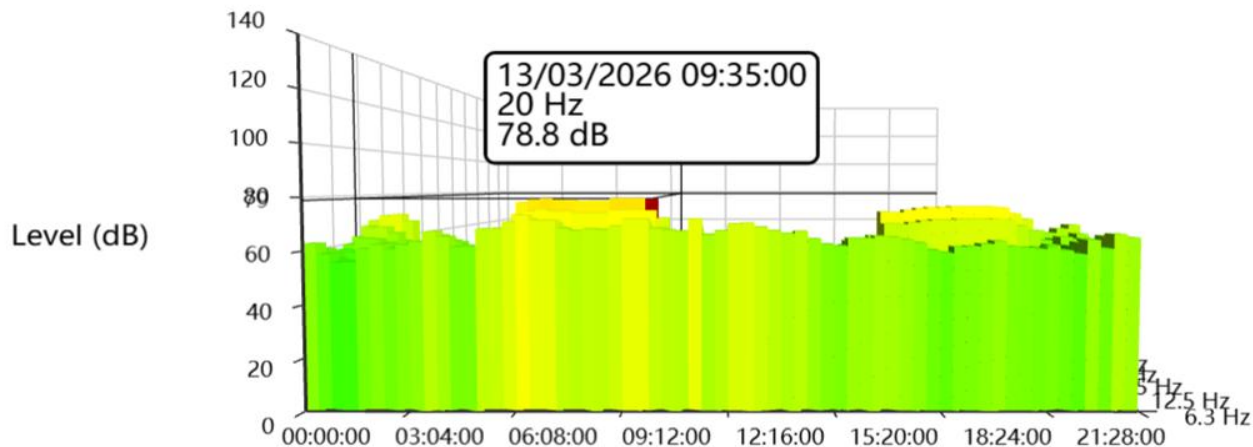
13/03/2026 - 13/03/2026

Week

Day

1:1 Octave

1:3 Octave



79





Aaron Felder

From: ajfelder@yahoo.com

To: advocate@northwestern.com



Mon, Jun 24, 2024 at 10:52 PM ☆

OFF!

Frequency Analysis



QT800027

Outdoor



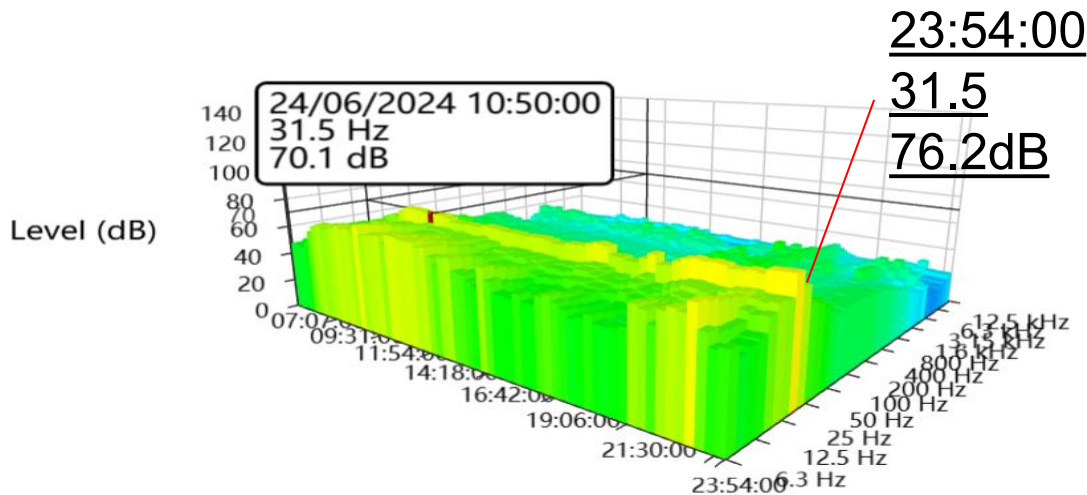
24/06/2024 - 24/06/2024

Week

Day

1:1 Octave

1:3





Aaron Felder

From: ajfelder@yahoo.com

To: Advocate



Mon, Oct 27, 2025 at 4:33 PM ☆

I can hear you in my home I can hear you outside my home you are a nuisance go away



QT800027

Outdoor

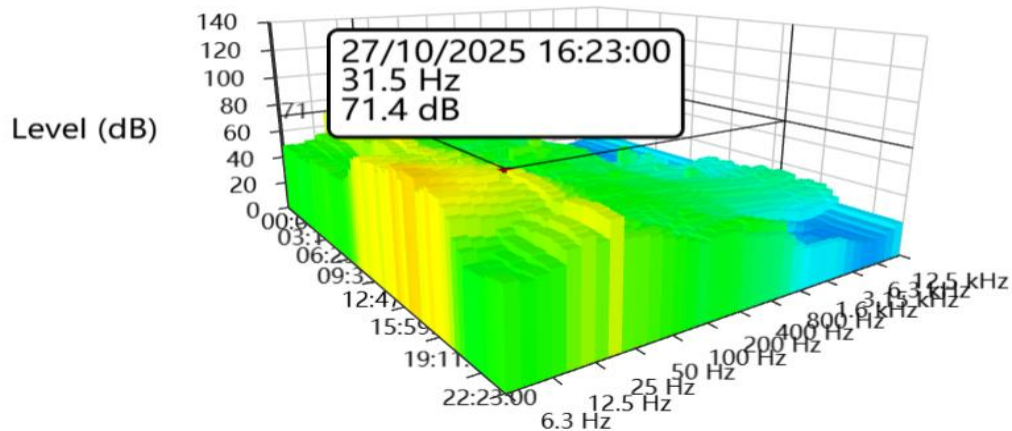
27/10/2025 - 27/10/2025

Week

Day

1:1 Octave

1:3





Aaron Felder

From: ajfelder@yahoo.com

To: Advocate, shannon.heim@northwestern.com, countyattorney@yellowstonecountymt.gov



Fri, Feb 13 at 3:15 PM

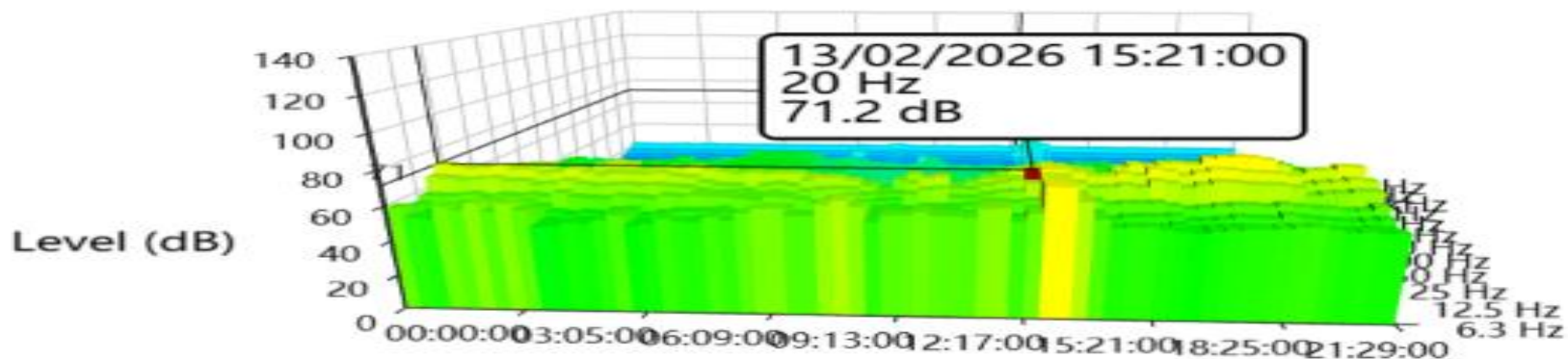
You are vibrating my home and my ears!

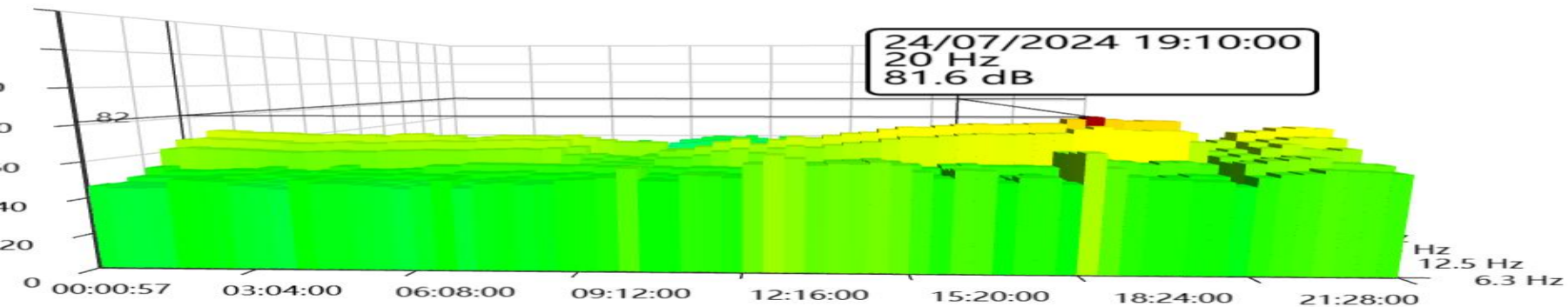
STOP!!!!!!



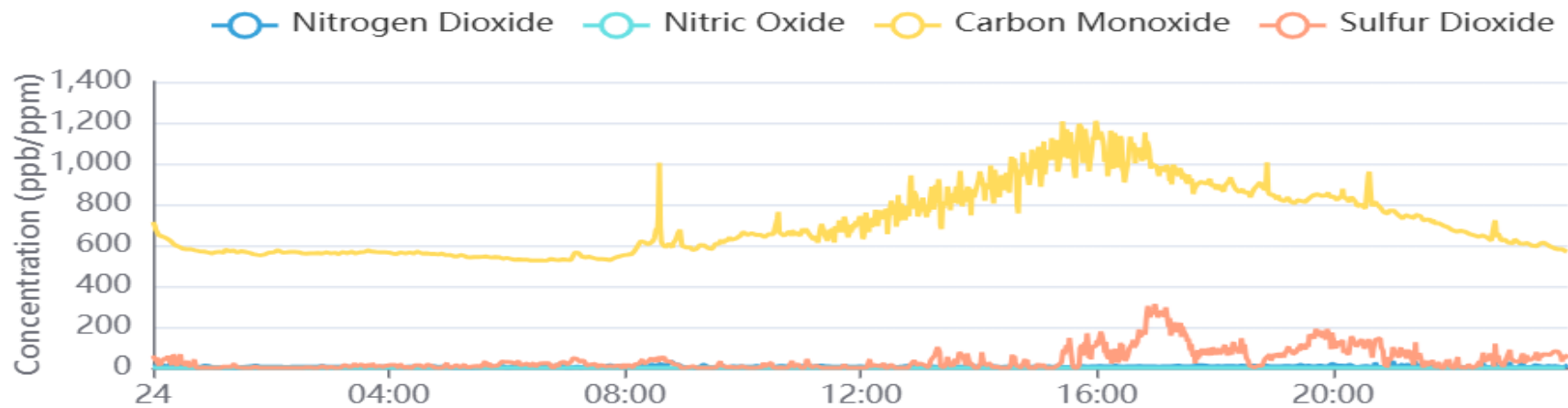
13/02/2026 - 13/02/2026

Week





Gases - NP Thiel Road Air Monitor





Aaron Felder

From: ajfelder@yahoo.com

To: Advocate

Cc: Shane Hensleigh, shannon.heim@northwestern.com,
countyattorney@yellowstonecountymt.gov, Molly Schwend, mmorse@yellowstonecountymt.gov



Tue, Mar 31 at 5:35 AM

2026

Rough night!

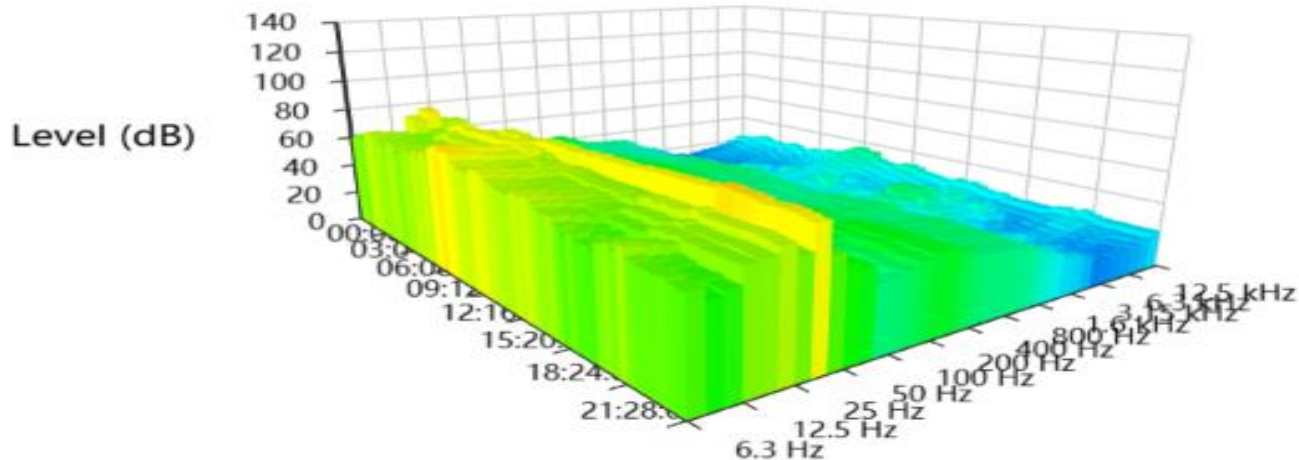


31/03/2026 - 31/03/2026

Week

Day

1:1 Octave



HOW CAN THE COUNTY HELP

- Require rezoning and special use permitting and applications for Generator Station and Data Centers.
- Require YCGS and any future data centers or industrial complexes to properly mitigate low frequency (and high frequency) sound from leaving their property.
 - Require new developments to not compound noise in a residential area.

WHY

- To provide detailed acoustic tests and studies to ensure accurate evaluation of potential sound impacts from the proposed development to adjacent residences and cultural resources, and to help ensure that any sound impacts are appropriately addressed.
- To ensure all sounds that leaves the property is at a low level of 40dB(A). To ensure low frequency or high frequency sounds do not impact residential areas (using C-weighting or Z-weighting).

By addressing noises created by YCGS and any future industrial complexes or data centers, the county will be properly taking care of the Yellowstone county residents.

Sources

- neuroathclinic.com Brainwave Frequencies and Levels of Consciousness
- <https://cirrusresearch.com/iec-61672-a-standard-for-sound-level-meters-in-three-parts/>
- <https://www.nonoise.org/library/suter/suter.htm#industry>

B.O.C.C Thursday Discussion

1.

Meeting Date: 06/30/2026

Title: Ostlund Building Security

Submitted By: Erika Guy

TOPIC:

Ostlund Building Security

BACKGROUND:

NA

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Discuss

B.O.C.C Thursday Discussion

2.

Meeting Date: 06/30/2026

Title: Board Recommendation

Submitted By: Erika Guy

TOPIC:

Board Recommendation - Aaron Kind to Historic Preservation Board

BACKGROUND:

See Attached

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Discuss

Attachments

Aaron Kind



Yellowstone Historic Preservation Board

*A certified local government (CLG)
Program representing four governing bodies:*

**City of Billings
City of Laurel**

**Crow Tribe
Yellowstone County**

May 18, 2026

Re: Aaron Kind as a board member

Dear Yellowstone County Commissioners:

On behalf of the Yellowstone Historic Preservation Board (YHPB), we are pleased to provide this letter of recommendation for Aaron Kind to be appointed as a member of the YHPB.

Aaron brings a great deal of experience with him from his experience working in historic preservation on historic sites in the State. He has several letters of recommendation, to this board, from others that he has worked with and he has been involved with many projects in his career. His knowledge and commitment to history preservation will be a great addition to the Yellowstone Historic Preservation Board.

Thank you for your consideration in appointing Aaron Kind as a member of the YHPB.

Respectfully,

Dave Green
Historic Preservation Officer
Planning & Community Services Division
City of Billings

MAY 18 2026

BOARD APPLICATION FORM
YELLOWSTONE COUNTY, MONTANA

NAME: AARON S. KIND HOME PHONE: 406-781-2289
ADDRESS: 3425 CASTLE PINE DR WORK PHONE: 406-252-1289
CITY: BILLINGS, MT STATE: MT ZIP: 59101
BUSINESS OR JOB: PARK MANAGER
E-MAIL ADDRESS: akind@mt.gov
BOARD OR COMMISSION APPLIED FOR: HERITAGE BOARD

Please describe your experience or background that you believe qualifies you for service on this Board or Commission (attach additional sheets if needed):

ANTHROPOLOGY DEGREE, HAVE WORKED FOR THE FOREST SERVICE, BLM, L&C INTERPRETIVE CENTER (G.FALLS) SANTA MONICA PIER AQUARIUM OLD TRAIL MUSEUM, CHIEF PLENTY COUPS STATE PARK, MY TIME HERE HAS BROUGHT MANY CONNECTIONS TO THE CROW PEOPLE, HISTORIC RESTORATION PROJECTS, INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMMING

Why do you wish to serve on this Board or Commission?

THOUGHT MY VARIOUS EXPERIENCES WOULD BE BENEFICIAL TO THE YELLOWSTONE COUNTY HERITAGE BOARD

Additional information that you feel is pertinent (attach additional sheets if needed):

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF INTERPRETIVE GUIDES TRAINER FOR 13 YEARS LEWIS & CLARK, MT NATIVE CULTURES, HISTORY, ARCHEOLOGY INTERESTS.



Signature

5/15/2026
Date

Return application to: Board of County Commissioners
P.O. Box 35000
Billings, MT 59107-5000

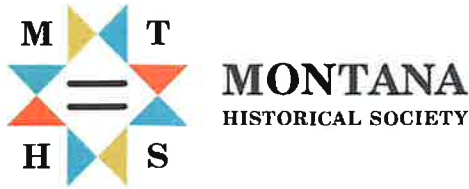
OFFICE USE ONLY:

APPOINTED: YES NO DATE _____

TERM EXPIRATION DATE: _____

(Circle one)

ORIGINAL APPOINTMENT REAPPOINTMENT TERM NO: _____



Historic Preservation
Museum
Outreach & Interpretation
Publications
Library & Archives

March 3, 2026

Dear Yellowstone County Historic Preservation Board,

Please consider this letter a professional recommendation for Aaron Kind for the Yellowstone County Historic Preservation Board. I have known Aaron for the last five years and can vouch for his strength of character, professionalism, commitment to heritage preservation and his unparalleled gift for interpreting our shared stories of place.

As the park manager at Chief Plenty Coups State Park, Aaron has a proven track record of maintaining partnerships and providing boots on the ground leadership to support historic preservation. From the careful cultivation of Chief Plenty Coups' heritage apple orchard to daily stewardship of the significant collection onsite, Kind's eye for detail supports Fish Wildlife and Parks mission and Chief Plenty Coups vision for the park. In 2022, the park was awarded a \$140,537 Save America's Treasures (SAT) grant from the Historic Preservation Fund administered by the National Park Service, Department of Interior. Aaron worked closely with archeologists and laborers to oversee preservation and repair of Chief Plenty Coups home and store that included roof replacement and work on the home's foundation, re-chinking and re-daubing logs, window rebuilding and re-glazing, roof replacement and the replacement of rotten logs.

With a strong background in anthropology, Aaron has honed his natural gift for interpretation through continuing education with the National Association for Interpretation, where is a certified trainer. Those fortunate to attend his programs, workshops, fieldtrips, trainings and events know he is a consummate professional and wonderful storyteller. Aaron has a way of revealing the heart of the matter to facilitate a deeper connection and understanding of place.

Collaborative and visionary, Aaron Kind will be an MVP on any team. I cannot wait to cheer for your work when he joins your Board.

My best,

Darby Bramble

Museum Education Officer

Montana Historical Society Darby.bramble2@mt.gov, or 406-444-4212

225 North Roberts Street
P.O. Box 201201
Helena, MT 59620-1201
406.444.2694
mhs.mt.gov

Derrick Rathe
Assistant Recreation Manager
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
8600 MT HWY 35
Bigfork, MT 59911
Derrick.rathe@mt.gov
3/20/2026

Dear Members of the Yellowstone County Heritage Board,

I am writing to offer my strong recommendation for Aaron Kind in support of his appointment with the County Heritage Board. I have had the privilege of working alongside Aaron for 6 years and 2 years prior to that, Aaron as a mentor. During that period, I have consistently been impressed by his depth of knowledge, professionalism, and unwavering commitment to preserving and promoting cultural and historical resources.

Aaron brings extensive experience in cultural management, tribal relations, historic documentation, archaeology, and education. His work reflects not only technical expertise but also a deep respect for the communities he represents. He has demonstrated an exceptional ability to collaborate with diverse stakeholders, including tribal representatives, government agencies, and the public, ensuring that cultural perspectives are honored and accurately conveyed.

In his role as a certified interpretive guide trainer, Aaron has shown a remarkable talent for coaching students on how to make complex historical, cultural, and natural topics accessible and engaging. His clear and authentic communication style is remarkable, fostering meaningful connections between people and place. His educational and coaching approach emphasizes inclusivity and stewardship, qualities that are essential for effective service on a heritage board.

Beyond his professional qualifications, Aaron is a person of integrity, reliability, and sound judgment. He approaches challenges thoughtfully and brings a balanced, informed perspective to all decision-making processes. His passion for heritage preservation is evident in both his work and his continued dedication to community engagement.

I am confident that Aaron would be an asset to the Yellowstone County Heritage Board. His expertise, collaborative spirit, and commitment to cultural and historical preservation make him exceptionally well-suited for this role.

Please feel free to contact me if you require any additional information.

Sincerely,
Derrick Rathe



March 24, 2026

To Whom It May Concern,

It is without reservation that I recommend Aaron Kind for appointment to the Yellowstone County Heritage Board. As Manager of First Peoples Buffalo Jump State Park, I have worked alongside Aaron in his role as Manager of Chief Plenty Coups State Park, and I can say with confidence that he brings precisely the depth of expertise, cultural sensitivity, and community leadership this board demands.

Aaron holds a strong professional background in Archaeology and Cultural Resource Management — a combination that is rare and invaluable in our field. At Chief Plenty Coups State Park, he manages the ongoing tension between site preservation and public access with exceptional skill, consistently delivering high-quality educational and interpretive experiences while safeguarding irreplaceable archaeological and cultural resources.

Perhaps most notably, Aaron has cultivated a deep and sustained relationship with the Crow Tribe — built not on formality, but on years of genuine collaboration. His leadership of the annual Day of Honor event, which draws hundreds of attendees, is a testament to the trust he has earned and the partnerships he has forged. This kind of relationship-building is not easily taught; it reflects both personal integrity and a profound respect for Indigenous communities and their heritage.

Aaron is also an exceptionally gifted communicator and educator. He leads our agency's Certified Interpretive Guide program, equipping new staff and AmeriCorps members with the tools to engage diverse audiences meaningfully and effectively. Beyond the agency, he runs a robust field trip program at his park, bringing hands-on cultural and historical education to hundreds of Montana youth each year. His ability to make complex history accessible — and compelling — is a skill this board would benefit from directly.

Aaron Kind is not simply qualified for a seat on the Yellowstone County Heritage Board — he is the kind of candidate who will strengthen it. I recommend him with the highest confidence.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Clark Aasom, Recreation Manager
First Peoples Buffalo Jump State Park
Ccarlson-thompson@mt.gov
(406) 866-2219

To the Yellowstone Historic Preservation Board,

Aaron Kind is one of the best folks you could ask to join your ranks. In the nine years I've worked for/with him, I have been impressed by his knowledge, experience, and passion for his work. His experience as an archeologist was essential while working with the Crow Tribe on the restoration of Chief Plenty Coups' house. This process took years and Aaron's experience with dig site protocols, restoration techniques, and experience running culturally sensitive archeological dig sites was critical to the success of the project.

Aaron is also the caretaker of the vault containing Chief Plenty Coups' belongings. These items are an invaluable insight into the Chief's daily life and the life of the Crow Tribe during a time of fraught transition. His care for these items is evident in their preservation, but also in the specialized tours for educators he gives. Each item is selected not only for its historical interest and importance, but also for its relevance to the group's interests. It was one of these tours that a connection with the Western Heritage Center was made. Since then, Aaron has worked closely with the curators of the Center, loaning items for select exhibits and consulting on the written content. Aaron's ability to make and foster connections like this is just one of his many strengths.

Aaron is also an excellent teacher. He has taught Certified Interpretive Guide for the Montana State Parks AmeriCorps program for 14 years, kickstarting countless careers and contributing to the furtherance of the interpretive field. His teaching style is one that encourages the students' exploration and growth, promoting their interests into research projects and educational programs in their parks. The AmeriCorps Members he teaches go on to be educators in the field of their choosing, whether that be archeology, aquatic invasive species, or park management, just to name a few.

One of his other skills is his ability to listen and make informed judgement calls. His respect for the Crow culture and ability to navigate difficult conversations has led to nearly 15 years of successful management of what is not only a State Park and National Historic Landmark, but also a vastly important piece of Crow Tribal history. He is an established member of the Pryor community and has the admiration of former and current members of the Crow Tribal Government as well as his fellow community members.

In short, I cannot think of a better person to sit on your Board. Aaron Kind has the experience, knowledge, and passion needed to craft decisions for historic preservation and projects for the future education of Yellowstone County.

Thank you,

Emily Tyler

Chris Dantic
204 Colorado Blvd
Glendive, MT 59330
March 31, 2026

Dear Yellowstone County Heritage Board,

From July 2013 to October 2016, Aaron Kind was my park ranger at Chief Plenty Coups State Park. During this time Aaron's talents, work ethic, intelligence and dedication helped Chief Plenty Coups State Park improve in many areas especially in our cultural collections. He worked very well independently but also as a team player with our state park team.

Aaron completed many tasks from groundskeeping and general maintenance to cataloguing artifacts into our repository. Aaron was also a cashier when needed, helped organize volunteers and was our lead in educational programming. Aaron's background in cultural collection management was instrumental in organizing the Chief Plenty Coups collection in the vault.

When I transferred to Makoshika State Park, Aaron was recognized for his passion and hard work and was promoted to Chief Plenty Coups State Park Manager and has been doing an outstanding job protecting the integrity of the Chief's home and gravesite. Aaron has the cultural experience, leadership, trustworthiness, and connections within Crow Nation to help the Yellowstone County Heritage Board with their future goals. I support Aaron to join your board and help lead your mission for Yellowstone County.

Sincerely,

Christopher Dantic

Christopher Dantic

(Former State Park Manager)

B.O.C.C Thursday Discussion

Meeting Date: 06/30/2026

Title: Data Center Initiative

Submitted By: Steve Williams

TOPIC:

CLOSED: Data Center Initiative

BACKGROUND:

A data center initiative has been proposed. The County needs to discuss the legality of the initiative.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Discuss

B.O.C.C Thursday Discussion

Meeting Date: 06/30/2026

Title: CLOSED: Health Insurance

Submitted By: Erika Guy

TOPIC:

CLOSED: Health Insurance

BACKGROUND:

NA

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Closed
