

**BIG HORN COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS**

121 3rd St W
Room 301
Hardin, MT 59034



**BIG HORN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS MINUTES
January 23, 2025
9:30 AM**

Members

Lawrence Big Hair, Presiding Officer
George Real Bird III, Member
Larry Vandersloot, Member

1. Call to Order

Commissioner Big Hair, Presiding Officer calls meeting to order.

2. Roll Call

Commissioner Big Hair, Presiding Officer, Commissioner Real Bird, member and Commissioner Vandersloot, member were all in attendance. Heather Ready, Deputy County Attorney, Lawrence Killsback, Economic Development Director, Anika Risener, Library Director, Mike Opie, accountant and Kristie Gatrell, Big Horn Hospital, CEO, were also in attendance.

3. Claim Approvals

Commissioner Vandersloot entertained a motion to approve Claims 1201 and 1202. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Real Bird and passed unanimously.

4. Approve Minutes and Supporting Documents

Commissioner Real Bird entertained a motion to approve Minutes of January 16, 2025. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Vandersloot and passed unanimously.

5. Personnel/Legal

6. Old Business

7. New Business

Library Coal Board application

Lawrence Killsback and Anika Reisner, presented a Coal Board Grant to replace the boiler and the fire box system at the Library building. The Board would like to include that library services are being extended to Lodge Grass and some language changed on the funding of the library. Commissioner Vandersloot entertained a motion to approve the library's coal board grant application pending the language changes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Real Bird and passed unanimously.

Hospital Coal Board Application

Kristie Gatrell, Big Horn Hospital CEO, present their Coal Board Grant they will be submitting for a communications upgrade. the phone system is from 2005 and parts are no longer available and is discontinued. They are also going out for other funding sources for this project. Commissioner Vandersloot entertained a motion to approve Resolution 2025-4. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Real Bird and passed unanimously.

8. Public Comments

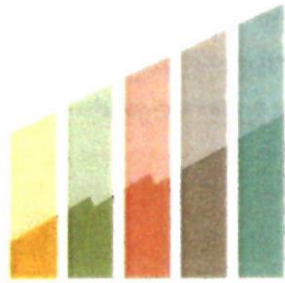
9. Discussion

10. Adjourn

There being no other business, the board adjourned.

Approved: L. B. Hair
Lawrence Big Hair, Presiding Officer

Attest: Peri Schenderline
Peri Schenderline, Deputy Clerk & Recorder



MONTANA

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Montana Coal Impact Grant Program Application



Submitted to the Montana Coal Board

by

Big Horn County Library

for

Boiler and Fire Systems Replacement

Date submitted: January 23, 2025



Appendix A: Coal Board Application
THE COAL IMPACT GRANT APPLICATION FORM
SUBMITTED BY BIG HORN COUNTY LIBRARY

CERTIFICATION

To the best of my knowledge and belief, the information provided in this application and in the attached documents is true and correct.

In accordance with Section 90-6-205, MCA, the applicant is eligible for Coal Board grants and has the statutory authority to make expenditures to provide for the particular service or facility.

Name: **Lawrence Pete Big Hair**

Title: **Presiding Officer, Board of Commissioners – Big Horn County**

Signature:

Date:

SUMMARY INFORMATION

1. NAME OF APPLICANT(S):

Big Horn County Library (BHCL)

2. AMOUNT OF COAL IMPACT GRANT REQUESTED:

\$180,620.41

3. TOTAL PROJECT COST:

\$ 200,620.41

4. NAME OF PROJECT:

Library Boiler and Fire Systems Replacement

5. TYPE OF PROJECT:

Public Building Repair: Purchase and Installation of Equipment

6. CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIAL OR AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:

Lawrence Pete Big Hair, Presiding Officer
Board of Commissioners – Big Horn County
121 W 3rd, Room 301
P.O. Box 908
Hardin, MT 59034
406-665-9700
pschenderline@bighorncountymt.gov

7. PRIMARY ENTITY CONTACT PERSON:

Anika Risener, Director
Big Horn County Library
419 N Custer Avenue
Hardin, MT 59034
406-665-9741
arisener@bighorncountymt.gov

8. OTHER CONTACT PERSONS:

Lawrence Jace Killsback, Director
Big Horn County Economic Development and Housing
121 W 3rd, Room 308
P.O. Box 908
Hardin, MT 59034
406-665-9811
lkillsback@bighorncountymt.gov

9. MILLAGE RATES:

Fiscal Year	Taxable Valuation	% Percent Change from Previous Year	Total Current Year Authorized Mill Levy	Current Year Actual Mill Levy	Carry Forward Mills Available
FY 22-23	\$22,130,068	-2.90%	266.57	165.42	101.15
FY 23-24	\$23,707,343	7.13%	273.10	230.81	42.29
FY 24-25	\$23,425,995	-1.19%	284.39	259.57	24.82

10. AMOUNT OF COAL GROSS PROCEEDS TAX:

Division	Mills	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
General Fund	22.39	\$1,534,561	\$1,464,196	\$1,363,048
Entitlement	1.43	\$98,141	\$93,640	\$87,172
Bridge	0.99	\$67,943	\$64,828	\$60,350
Medical Facilities	2.08	\$142,750	\$136,204	\$126,795
Refunding Bonds	2.68	\$183,928	\$175,494	\$163,371
Internal Service Health	2.98	\$204,517	\$195,139	\$181,658
Road	29.27	\$636,198	\$607,026	\$565,092
University Mills	6.00	\$411,778	\$392,897	\$365,755
Elementary General	28.00	\$1,921,633	\$1,833,519	\$1,706,858
Elementary Retirement	7.48	\$513,350	\$489,812	\$455,975
High School General	17.00	\$1,166,706	\$1,113,208	\$1,036,307
High School Transportation	0.84	\$57,649	\$55,006	\$51,206
High School Retirement	3.52	\$241,577	\$230,500	\$214,576
SD # 1	0.25	\$17,157	\$16,371	\$15,240
SD # 2	0.02	\$1,373	\$1,310	\$1,219
H.S. General	7.81	\$535,998	\$511,421	\$476,091
H.S. Transportation	0.55	\$37,746	\$36,016	\$33,528
L.G. Debt Service	2.22	\$152,358	\$145,372	\$135,329
H.S. Comp Insurance	0.74	\$50,786	\$48,457	\$45,110
H.S. Adult Education	0.09	\$6,177	\$5,893	\$5,486
Totals	116.31	\$7,982,325	\$7,616,308	\$7,090,166

In Fiscal Year 2024, Big Horn County received \$7,616,308 in coal gross proceeds tax and in Fiscal Year 2025 the total was \$7,090,166. Approximately 34% of annual coal gross proceeds tax is allocated to County Department budgets with approximately 66% going to our County Schools.

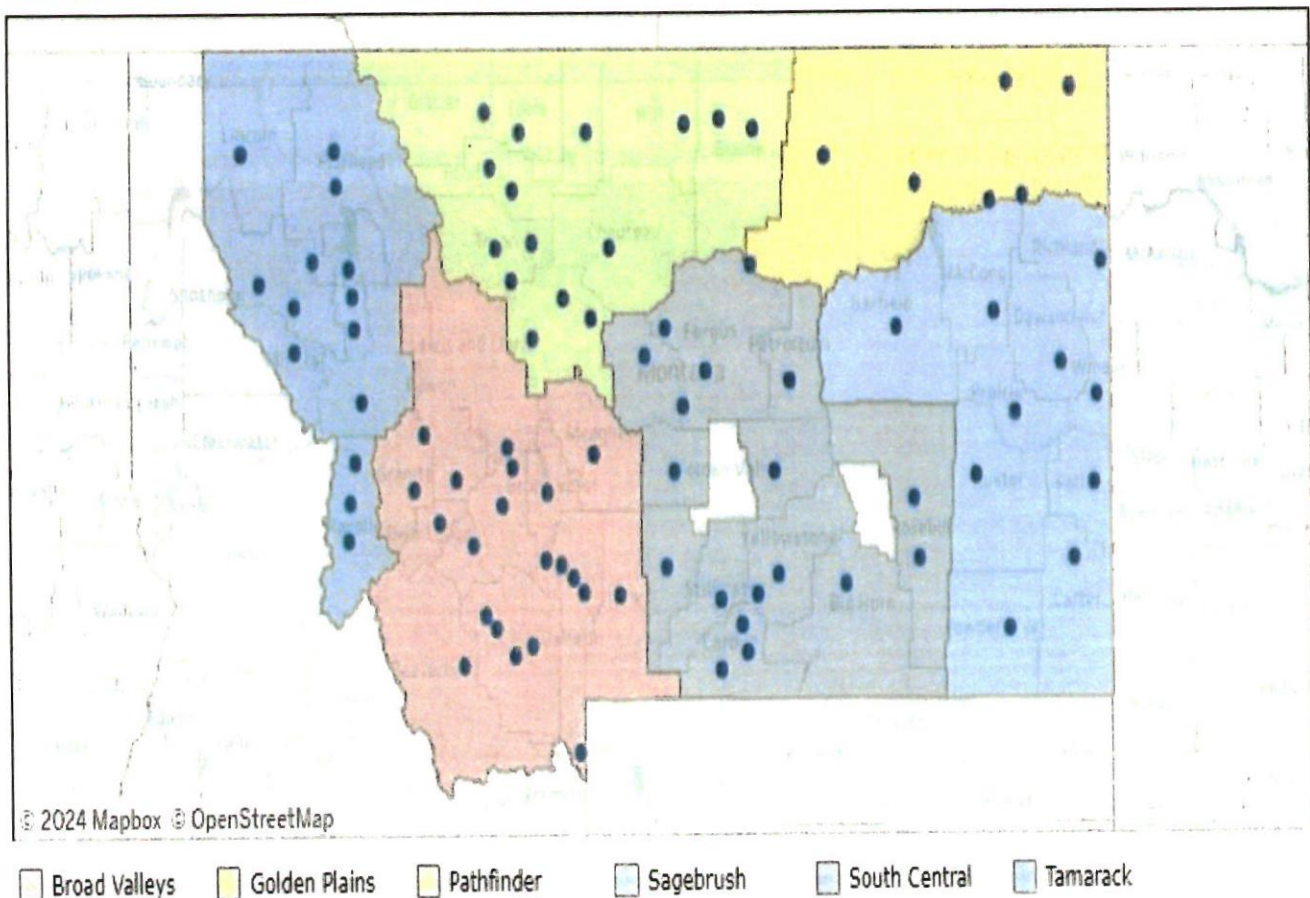
Coal gross proceeds taxes are allocated specifically to governments where coal mines are located, which are the Crow Indian Reservation and Big Horn County. The Westmoreland's Absaloka Coal Mine proceeds are earmarked for the Crow Tribe of Indians as per capita payments for their tribal citizens. At the same time, the Big Horn County's allocation is distributed based on the 1986 Tax Levy to support County government activities related to general operations, roads, bridges, medical facilities, refunding bonds, internal service health, and school funds.

Currently, Big Horn County is utilizing all available coal gross proceeds for general operating purposes, which are authorized through our annual budgeting process. Big Horn County is considered the most coal-reliant County in the United States. While the County saw an increase in Coal Gross Proceeds Tax between 2022 and 2023, the drastic downturn in the coal industry has significantly hit the County's financial position. The vast majority of the County is federal land held in trust by the U.S. Government for the Crow Tribe and it is not included in Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT). Historically, coal taxes have been used to lower the tax burden for County citizens and businesses and are meant to provide for the purchase of capital assets.

II. MAPS:

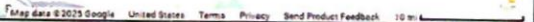
A map showing libraries and their respective Montana State Library Federations Regions. ↓

LIBRARIES RECEIVING FEDERATION GRANTS

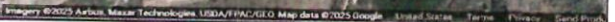


Source: [Montana State Library](https://www.mtlib.org/)

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Source: Google Maps



Source: Google Maps

12. BRIEF PROJECT SUMMARY FOR BIG HORN COUNTY LIBRARY

Historical Information: The Big Horn County Library (BHCL) is located at 419 North Custer Avenue and is the cornerstone of the historic town of Hardin, Montana. Big Horn County is one of the bigger counties in the state, with a large geographical size of 3.2 million acres, including the Crow Indian Reservation (46% of County land) and the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation (6% of County land). The BHCL holds a special place in the hearts of Hardin residents, and the broader Big Horn County community.

The library's origins date back to 1909 when local women began fundraising efforts to establish a public library and by 1912, a small library was opened in the home of Walter and Ella Fearis. With the support of a mill levy passed in 1914 and a generous donation from Andrew Carnegie, the current library building was constructed and opened its doors in 1919. The library's Neoclassical architecture, designed by C.L. Pruett, remains a testament to the community's dedication to education and cultural enrichment. The BHCL was remodeled in 1948 and 1973, with a major renovation and expansion taking place in 1987. Through decades other enhancements and projects took place in order to remain compliant with federal laws like the installation of an elevator, or upgrading computers and security systems to keep pace with advances in technology.

The building is 12,500 square feet of which 10,000 square feet is used to provide free services to the general public. Over 13,000 Big Horn County citizens make up the service population who are from long-time generational County families, newcomers to the land, and enrolled tribal members of the Crow Tribe of Indians and the Northern Cheyenne Nation. Additionally, the BHCL welcomes many tourists, visitors, and schools to the facility to partake in the library activities and resources. It is estimated that over 250,000 tourists visit the County to take advantage of the many recreational attractions and historical areas such as the National Park Services' Little Big Horn Battlefield and the Big Horn Canyon. Other sites include the Battle of the Rosebud Historical Site, Chief Two Moons Monument, Yellowtail Dam, Tongue River Reservoir, Pryor Mountain Horse Range, Big Horn River, the Historic Hardin Depot, and Big Horn County Museum. Annual events such as the Crow Fair Powwow and Rodeo, Northern Cheyenne Chiefs Powwow and Rodeo, Battle of the Little Big Horn Reenactments, and various historical and cultural gatherings draw additional visitors throughout the year.

The Big Horn County Library is more than just a repository of books; it is a focal point for the city of Hardin and the surrounding Crow Indian and Northern Cheyenne reservations. The library serves a diverse population providing essential services such as internet access, educational programs, and community events. The BHCL is the only officially recognized public library in the County and remains a safe haven for children, a resource for job seekers, and a gathering place for residents of all ages and backgrounds. The library's role is especially crucial in a community that faces socioeconomic challenges, offering free access to information and resources that empower individuals and families.

Problem: The current boiler system and fire alarm system at the Big Horn County Library are damaged, outdated, and need to be replaced. Specifically, the fire alarm system is in violation of local City building code standards. On January 13, 2025, an inspection was completed by the Big Horn County Fire Marshall. Their findings identified the fire alarm system as inadequate, outdated, and nonfunctional, and that the system could not properly alert the building patrons and staff in the event of a fire outbreak.

The existing boiler system, which provides heating during the harsh Montana winters, built in 2007 has suffered extensive wear and tear. Frequent breakdowns and inefficient operation have led to inconsistent heating, resulting in discomfort for library users and increased operational costs.

Additionally, the outdated system poses safety risks, including potential leaks and malfunctions, which could lead to hazardous conditions. The boiler system is not adequate in functioning to warm the facility, leaving the library environment unsafe and open to potential health risks to staff and patrons, particularly the most vulnerable populations such as children and elders. Both of these system issues not only threaten the physical safety of the library building and its occupants but also jeopardize the preservation of valuable historical documents and resources that its houses.

Proposed Solution: We propose the installation of a new, state-of-the-art boiler system and fire alarm system for the BHCL. These new systems will enhance reliability by ensuring consistent and dependable heating and proper fire notification throughout the library. New systems will improve energy efficiency to reduce energy consumption and lower utility costs, contributing to the library's sustainability goals. Finally, new boiler and fire alarm systems will increase safety by eliminating the risks associated with the old, damaged system, providing a healthier and safer environment for all. Investing in a new boiler system and a new fire alarm system for the BHCL is essential to address the serious deficiencies of the current systems and bring them up to code. These upgrades will not only improve the comfort and safety of our patrons and staff but also enhance the library's ability to serve the community effectively. The primary goal of this project is to ensure the health and safety of all who use and work at the BBHCL.

A quote for the cost of equipment and labor to replace the fire alarm system is included in Exhibit A. However, because the County was unable to obtain a quote specific for the proposed boiler system, a previous quote with detailed information for the County Road Department Building is attached to be used in order reflect the estimated cost of installing two new Lochinvar boilers in the BHCL. See Exhibit A.

13. PROJECT BUDGET AND IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE:

A. Project Budget Form:

The total estimated cost for the BHCL's purchase and installation of a new boiler system is estimated at \$155,411.46 and the upgrade of the fire alarm system is \$45,209.41, totaling \$202,120.87.

ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS	SOURCE:	SOURCE: Big Horn County Library	SOURCE: MT Coal Board	TOTAL:
Grant Administration	\$	\$ 1,000	\$	\$
Office Costs	\$	\$ 5,00	\$	\$
Professional Services	\$	\$	\$	\$
Legal Costs	\$	\$	\$	\$
Travel & Training	\$	\$	\$	\$
<u>TOTAL ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS</u>	\$0	\$1,500	\$0	\$1,500

ACTIVITY COSTS:				
Equipment Cost	\$	\$		\$
Construction Cost	\$	\$ 45,000	\$155,620.87	\$
Architectural/Engineering Design	\$	\$	\$	\$
Product Completion (PER's, studies, etc.)	\$	\$	\$	\$
Contingency	\$	\$	\$	\$
TOTAL ACTIVITY COSTS	\$0	\$ 45,000	\$155,620.87	\$200,620.87
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	\$0	\$ 46,500	\$155,620.87	\$202,120.87

B. Project Budget Narrative:

ADMINISTRATIVE COST

Grant Administration Cost: **\$1,000.00**
 BHCL Director will manage the grant and be responsible for administrative duties related to reporting, communicating, and payments related to the project.

Office Cost: **\$500.00**
 Any cost associated with the administration of the grant that includes use and purchase of office supplies, mail services, printing, and internet access.

Source of Funds: **Big Horn County Library Funds \$1,500.00**
TOTAL \$1,500.00

ACTIVITY COSTS

Equipment Cost: **\$ 0**
 Equipment cost are included with the Construction Cost. Quotes for replacing both the boiler system and the fire alarm system include parts and labor as costs associated with the purchase and installation of two Lochinvar units and a new fire alarm panel.

Construction Cost: **\$ 200,620.87**
 Construction costs includes the cost of replacing the old boiler system and fire alarm system with the purchase and installation of new a boiler system and a new fire alarm system. The price quotes are provided in Exhibit A.

Construction cost includes deductible for an insurance claim on the Fire Alarm System and use of BHCL's Capital Improvement Fund Savings

Source of Funds: **Big Horn County Library Funds \$ 45,000.00**
Coal Board Impact Grant Funds \$155,620.87
TOTAL \$200,620.87

TOTAL ACTIVITY COSTS: \$200,620.87

TOTAL PROJECT COSTS: \$202,120.87

C. Implementation Schedule:

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE FOR BIG HORN COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT EQUIPMENT UPGRADES												
TASK	QUARTERS 2025				QUARTERS 2026				QUARTERS 2027			
	1ST	2ND D	3RD	4TH H	1ST	2ND	3^R D	4^T H	1^S T	2^N D	3^R D	4^T H
<u>PROJECT START-UP</u>												
A. Sign contract with Coal Board.		X										
B. Secure approval of other funding – Complete.			X									
C. Submit progress reports and drawdown request.			X	X	X	X						
<u>PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION</u>												
A. Purchase equipment.			X									
<u>PROJECT CLOSE-OUT</u>												
A. Coal Board administrative staff conduct on-site monitoring of the project.				X								
B. Submit project completion report.				X								
C. Include project in audits.				X								

14. DESCRIPTION OF RELATIONSHIP TO COAL BOARD STATUTORY GRANT CRITERIA

The Coal Board bases awards on the following four statutory criteria (90-6-206, MCA). In addition, State law (90-6-207(5), MCA) requires attention be given to the need for community planning before the full impact of coal development or decline is realized.

A. Need

Explain how the assistance that is required to eliminate or reduce a direct and obvious threat to the public health, safety, or welfare that has been caused as a direct result of coal development or decline. (90-6-206, MCA)

I. Does a serious deficiency exist in a basic or necessary community public facility or service?

Yes, a serious deficiency exists in the BHCL's boiler system. BHCL serves as a crucial hub for education, information, and community engagement, providing essential services to residents of all ages. However, the library's current boiler system is outdated and damaged, posing significant challenges to maintaining a comfortable and safe environment for patrons and staff.

The outdated and damaged boiler system has created significant challenges that impact the library's ability to function effectively and safely. The current boiler system, which is over 18 years old, experiences frequent breakdowns, leading to unplanned closures and disruptions in library services. On average, the system fails 3-4 times per month, requiring emergency repairs that strain the library's budget and resources because replacement parts are scarce and expensive. During colder months, the outdated boiler struggles to maintain consistent temperatures throughout the library, resulting in uncomfortable conditions for patrons and staff. Over the past year, the library has spent approximately \$6,500 on emergency repairs and maintenance, diverting funds from other critical programs and services. The damaged boiler poses potential safety risks, including the possibility of leaks and malfunctions. These issues not only jeopardize the physical safety of patrons and staff but also create an environment that is not conducive to learning and community activities. **See the Attached Maintenance and Repair Records in Exhibit A.**

Additionally, a serious deficiency exists with BHCL's fire alarm system because the current fire alarm is outdated, damaged, and no longer up to city code, posing significant risks to the health and safety of patrons, staff, and the library's valuable collections. The existing fire alarm system is over 20 years old and does not meet current city codes and safety standards. This outdated system is not equipped to handle modern fire safety requirements, increasing the risk of inadequate response in the event of a fire. The damaged system has experienced multiple malfunctions over the past year, including false alarms and failure to activate during routine tests. Today, the system is not fully functional raising serious concerns about its reliability in an emergency, which poses a significant safety hazard. In the event of a fire, the outdated system may fail to alert occupants effectively, putting patrons, staff, and the library's collections at risk. This could result in substantial property loss, injuries, or even fatalities. The current system's non-compliance with city fire safety codes means the library is at risk of penalties and potential closure until the deficiencies are addressed. This non-compliance also impacts the library's insurance coverage, potentially leading to higher premiums or denial of claims in the event of a fire.

2. Have serious public health or safety problems that are clearly attributable to a deficiency occurred, or are they likely to occur, such as illness, disease outbreak, substantial property loss, environmental pollution, safety problems, hazards, or health risks?

Yes, serious public health and safety problems have occurred and are likely to continue occurring due to the outdated and damaged BHCL boiler system. The deficiencies in the current boiler system pose significant risks, including health hazards, safety problems, and potential property damage. The inconsistent heating provided by the outdated boiler has led to uncomfortable and potentially unsafe conditions, especially during the colder months. Patrons, including children and the elderly, are at risk of health issues such as cold-related illnesses and respiratory problems due to prolonged exposure to cold temperatures within the library. The damaged boiler has been linked to poor indoor air quality, with increased levels of dust and pollutants circulating in the library. This can exacerbate respiratory conditions such as asthma and allergies among patrons and staff.

The aging boiler system is prone to leaks, which can lead to water damage, mold growth, and structural issues within the library. These leaks pose a direct safety hazard to both patrons and staff, increasing the risk of slips, falls, and exposure to mold-related health problems. The

malfunctioning boiler has an increased risk of overheating and electrical faults, which could potentially lead to a fire. This presents a serious safety threat to everyone in the building and could result in substantial property loss. The outdated boiler operates inefficiently, consuming excessive amounts of energy and contributing to higher greenhouse gas emissions. This not only increases the library's carbon footprint but also contributes to environmental pollution, impacting the broader community. The serious public health and safety problems attributable to the outdated and damaged boiler system necessitate immediate action. Replacing the boiler is essential to ensure a safe, healthy, and comfortable environment for all BHCL patrons and staff. **See the Attached Maintenance and Repair Records in Exhibit A.**

Additionally, serious public health and safety problems have occurred and are likely to continue occurring due to BHCL's outdated and damaged fire alarm system. The deficiencies in the current system pose significant risks in the event of a fire, which could lead to increased exposure to smoke and toxic fumes for patrons and staff. This can cause respiratory issues and other health problems, particularly for vulnerable populations such as children and the elderly. There are serious public health and safety problems that are attributable to the outdated and damaged fire alarm system and it is essential to replace the system to ensure the health safety of patrons, staff, and the library's collections, as well as to comply with city fire safety codes. **See the Attached Maintenance and Repair Records in Exhibit A.**

3. Is there clear documentation that the current condition of the public facility or service (or lack of a facility or service) violates, or may potentially violate a state or federal health or safety standard?

Yes, there is clear documentation that the current condition of BHCL's fire alarm system violates a state health and safety standard. The fire inspection conducted at the library identified a violation of the Fire Code adopted by the State of Montana, specifically Violation 907: Fire Alarm Systems. The fire alarm system is not in compliance with the International Fire Code (IFC) 2021, Section 907.1, which covers the application, installation, performance, and maintenance of fire alarm systems and their components in new and existing buildings and structures. The specific requirements for existing buildings are outlined in Section 907.9.

The inspection report noted that the alarm panel is not working due to water damage. This deficiency needs to be addressed to bring the system up to code. Failure to correct the listed violation(s) will result in additional action as required by law, including prosecution for a misdemeanor offense in accordance with MCA TITLE 50, Chapter 61.

An inoperative fire alarm system poses significant safety risks to patrons, staff, and the library's collections. In the event of a fire, the lack of a functioning alarm system could lead to delayed evacuation, increased risk of injury or fatalities, and substantial property loss. The current condition of the fire alarm system at BHCL clearly violates state health and safety standards, as documented in the recent fire inspection report. Addressing this violation is essential to ensure the safety of all library patrons and staff, as well as to comply with legal requirements. **See the Inspection Report in Exhibit B.**

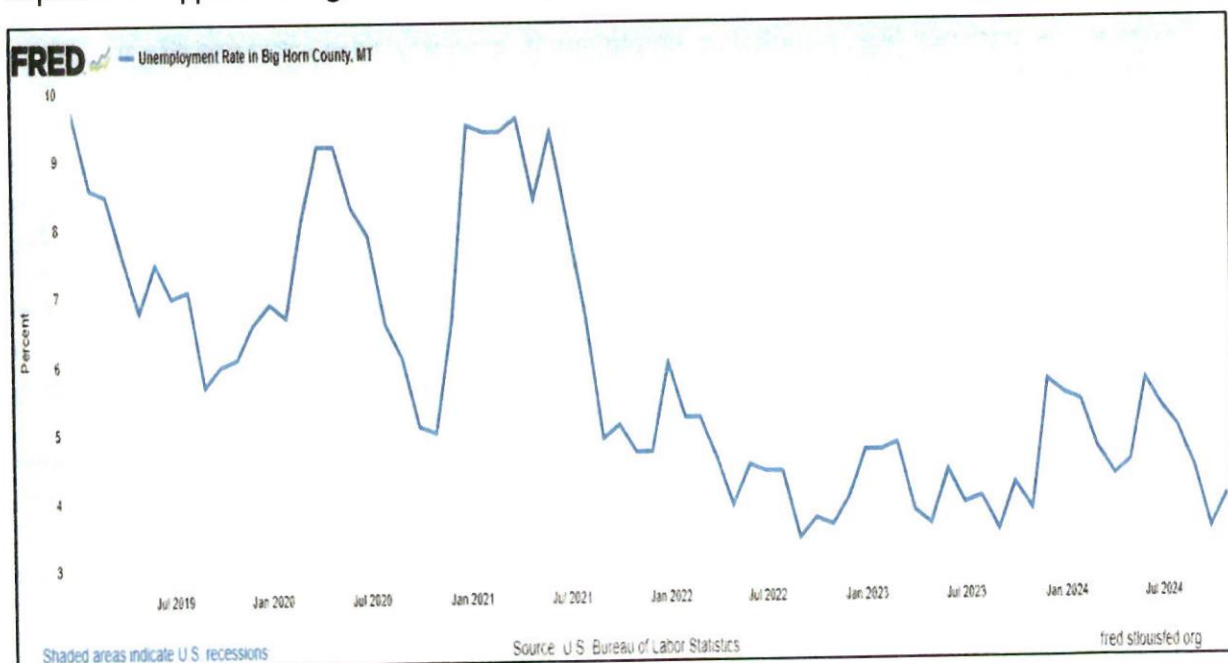
4. Describe how the need for the expansion or improvement of the public facility or public service is attributable to coal-related energy complexes to your community and the road miles from your community.

Big Horn County, located in southeastern Montana, has been significantly influenced by coal-related energy production. County taxpayers historically enjoyed low tax rates with coal mining accounting for a large share of the budget. However, the decline in the demand for coal has hit the County hard in recent years and will continue to have a detrimental effect on unemployment and job insecurity, tax rates, and population numbers.

The presence of coal-related energy complexes, such as the Absaloka Coal Mine, Spring Creek Mine, and the Hardin Powerplant, profoundly impact the community's infrastructure and public services. Absaloka Coal Mine, located 30 miles away on the Crow Indian Reservation, has been a significant source of employment and revenue for the region by employing over 100 persons; whereas Spring Creek Mine located 80 miles away near Decker, MT employs over 250 persons. In 2023, Montana mined approximately 28 million tons of coal, accounting for 5% of all U.S. coal production. Big Horn County is responsible for producing over 19.5 million tons accounting for 7% of Montana's coal production.¹

Based on the Montana Coal Board's Coal Impacted Local Governmental Units Designation Report for the 2025 Biennium, Big Horn County is designated as a local government unit impacted by coal development based on MCA 90-6-207 (1)(d)(i).² Essentially, Big Horn County is designated because the West Decker Mine, which is located in Big Horn County, closed and "ceased all significant mining". According to Federal Reserve Economic Data (FRED), created and maintained by the Research Department at the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, Big Horn County's unemployment rate has seen some drastic swings since 2014, from a high of 15.5% in June 2017 to a low of 3.5% in September 2022.

As illustrated in the graph below, Big Horn County's unemployment rate jumped from 5.1% to 9.6% immediately following the closure of the Decker Mine. Although unemployment rates are currently hovering at about 5%, the pending closure of the Absaloka Coal Mine will create an impact that ripples throughout the County.



¹ MT-Coal-Tonnage-Report.pdf

² Accessed online at https://commerce.mt.gov/_shared/comdev/COAL/docs/Board/CB-Impacted-Units-List-2025Bi.pdf and https://commerce.mt.gov/_shared/comdev/COAL/docs/Board/CB-Impacted-Governmental-Units-Designation-Report-25Bi-July-23-Update.pdf

The need to replace the damaged and outdated boiler system at the BHCL is directly attributable to the effects of these coal-related energy complexes. Big Horn County has historically relied on coal mining and coal-fired power generation as major economic drivers. However, the decline in coal production and the closure of several coal-fired power plants and mines in Montana have led to economic challenges, including job losses and reduced tax revenues. This economic decline has strained public services and infrastructure, including the maintenance and upgrading of essential facilities like the BHCL. The fluctuating coal industry has led to population shifts, with periods of growth during peak production and declines during downturns. These shifts have placed varying demands on public facilities and services, such as the public library.

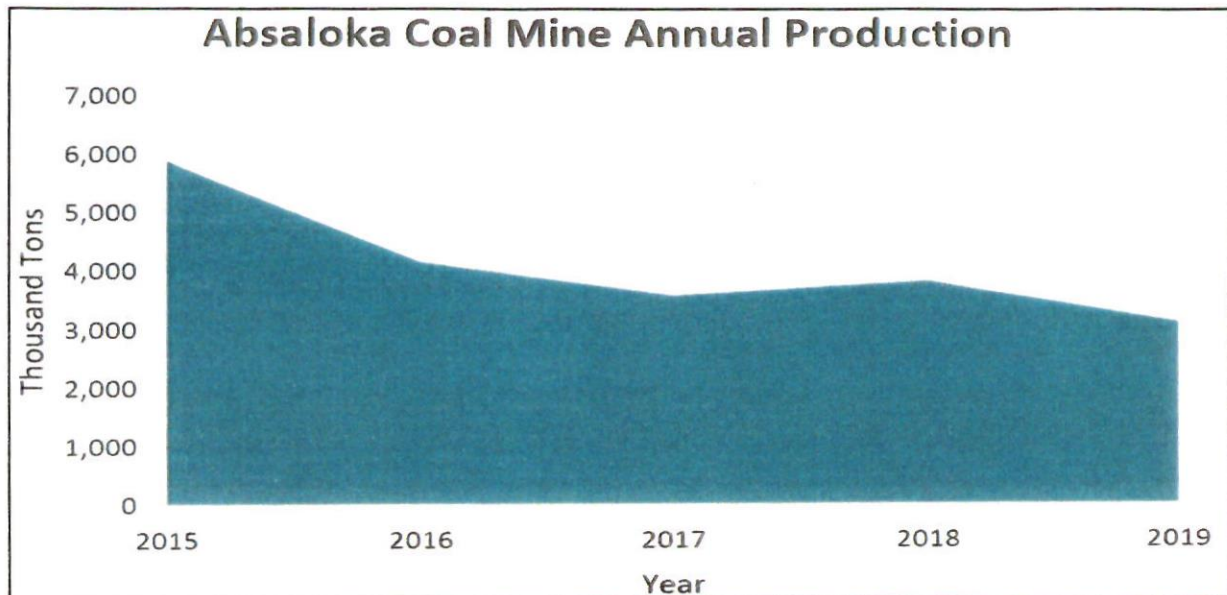
The need for a reliable and efficient boiler system and fire alarm system is critical to ensure the library can continue to provide a comfortable and safe learning environment for patrons. The transportation of coal and related materials has contributed to the wear and tear of local infrastructure, including roads and public buildings. Heavy truck traffic and rail transport associated with coal mining and power generation have accelerated the deterioration of these facilities. Coal-related activities have also had environmental and health impacts on the community. Air and water pollution from coal mining and combustion have raised concerns about public health and environmental quality. A reliable and efficient boiler system is essential to maintain indoor air quality and ensure the health and safety of library patrons and staff.

B. Degree of Severity of Impact from an Increase or Decrease in Coal Development or In the Consumption of Coal by A Coal-Using Energy Complex

Explain the rapidity of growth or decline and subsequent development of the problem and the number of people affected. (90-6-205(4)(a), MCA) and 8.101.301(2)(b), ARM.

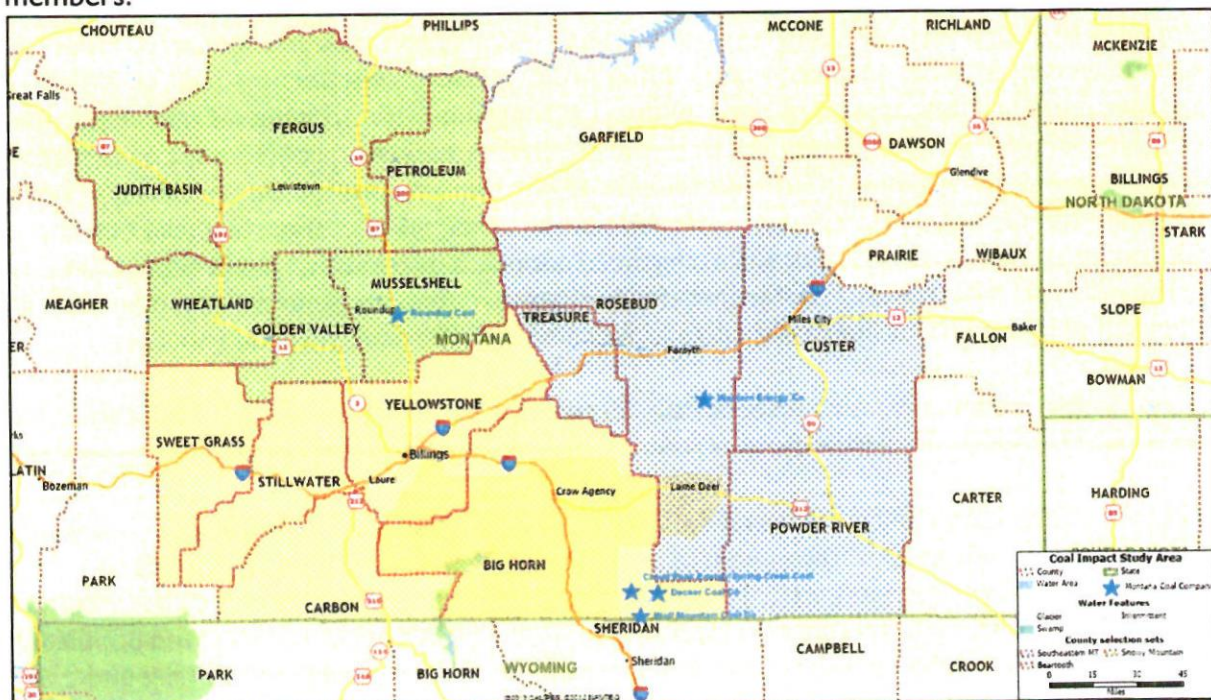
- I. Describe the severity of the coal-related impacts including how coal is affecting rates of change in the statistics (e.g., population, employment, property taxes) and provide supporting documentation.

As the largest coal-producing County in the State of Montana, Big Horn County more than qualifies to receive coal impact assistance. The Decker Coal Mine located in Big Horn County closed in 2021 after its owner, Lighthouse Resources, filed for bankruptcy. The Absaloka Coal Mine, owned by Westmoreland Mining, is located in Hardin, the county seat of Big Horn County. This mine is one of four coal mines still operating in Montana and currently produces approximately 1-2 million tons annually. Its customer base has been reduced to just one customer – the Sherburne County Generating Station (Sherco) plant owned by Xcel Energy. The plant shut down one of its coal units in 2023 and will shut down the remaining two coal units in 2026 and 2030, signaling the end of the Absaloka Coal Mine. Because Westmoreland became a privately held company in 2019, production data after 2019 is not publicly available. However, the Mine Safety and Health Administration did report on mine operations in 2023 showing that the Absaloka Coal Mine produced 2,036,461 million tons of coal and employed 101 people.



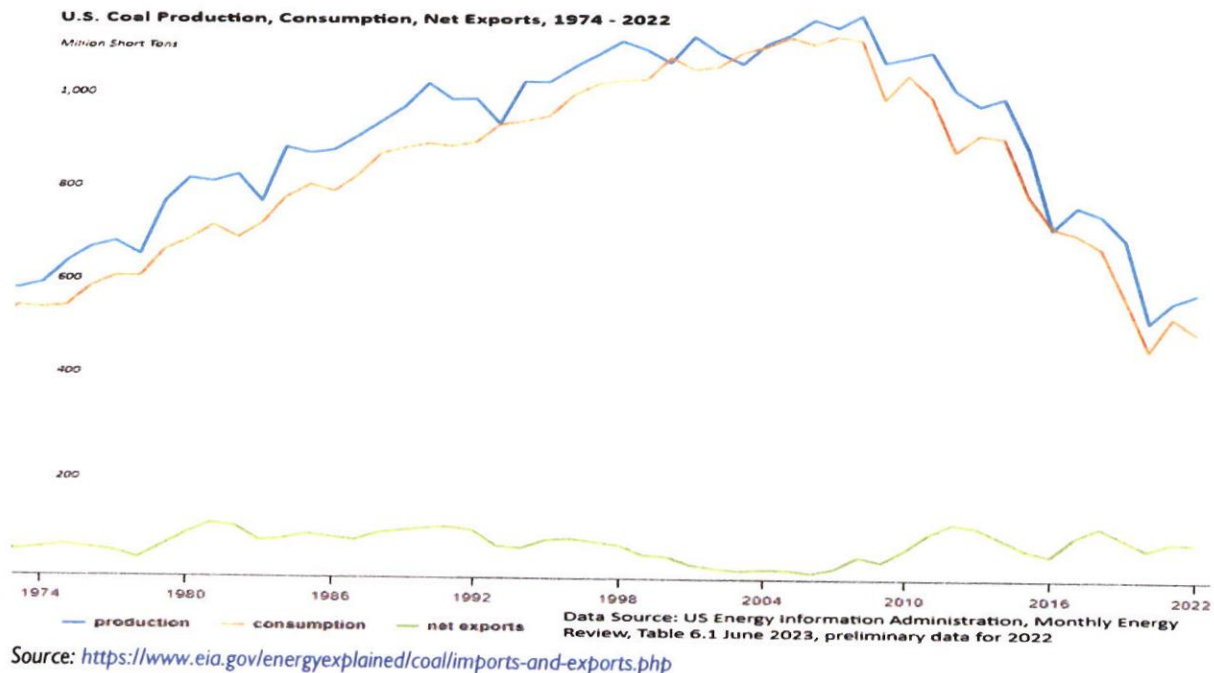
Source: <https://miningdataonline.com/property/82/Absaloka-Mine.aspx>

According to the 2022-2027 Beartooth Resource, Conservation, and Development (R&CD) District's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which Big Horn County is part of, mining activity is and has been prevalent in the region. However, Big Horn County is most at risk with renewable energy sources becoming more of a national focus due to recent changes in the coal industry. Big Horn County is part of the 15-county region in eastern Montana that is considered Montana's Coal Country (pictured below). Key projects identified in the CEDS include participating in an annual energy summit with Coal Country Coalition members.



Source: <https://www.nado.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/21/Coal-Country-Coalition-Report-FINAL-3-17.pdf>

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, between 2015 and 2022, both coal production and consumption for the U.S. declined by approximately 34%, while net exports increased by about 25%.



The coal industry's ongoing volatility will continue to impact Big Horn County and its communities. Closure of the Decker Coal Mine in 2021 and reduced production at the Absaloka Coal Mine have impacted the population of Big Horn County. A decreasing population generally leads to a decline in tax revenue, which results in reduced funding for local governments. With fewer residents, there are fewer people earning wages, resulting in lower income tax collections. A shrinking population can also lead to lower demand for housing and commercial properties, reducing property values. As property values decline, so does the revenue generated from property taxes. Additionally, vacant properties may not contribute to tax revenue at all if they are abandoned. With a declining population, businesses may experience reduced demand for their products or services, leading to lower profits and, consequently, lower business tax revenues. Some businesses might even relocate or close entirely, further shrinking the tax base. Additionally, a smaller tax base may place a larger financial burden on the remaining population, potentially forcing more people to move away, exacerbating the cycle. A shrinking tax base makes it challenging for local governments to generate revenue and fund essential services without increasing taxes and/or finding alternative revenue sources.

2. Is the entire community, or a substantial percentage of the residents of the community, seriously affected by the deficiency or at risk, as opposed to a small percentage of the residents?

Yes, the entire community, a substantial percentage of the County residents, is seriously affected by the deficiency of the outdated and damaged boiler and fire alarm systems at the BHCL. The library serves as a crucial public facility, providing essential services and resources to a significant portion of the county's population. Big Horn County has an estimated population of approximately 13,000 residents. The county seat, Hardin, has a population of around 3,676 residents³. The library serves not only the residents of Hardin but also the surrounding rural areas and both the Crow Indian Reservation and the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation, making it a vital resource for a large portion of the County's population. There are

³ [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Big Horn County, Montana](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/big-horn-county-montana)

approximately 3,691 households in Big Horn County⁴. The library provides essential services such as access to books, educational programs, internet access, and community events, which are utilized by a significant number of these households.

The outdated and damaged boiler system affects the library's ability to maintain a comfortable and safe environment, particularly during the colder months. Similarly, the outdated and damaged fire alarm system puts a significant number of community residents at risk in the event of a fire. The library is especially important for vulnerable populations, including children, the elderly, and low-income families. Approximately 31.1% of the County's population is under the age of 18, and 14.5% are 65 years and older⁵. These groups rely heavily on the library for educational resources, social interaction, and a warm, safe place to spend time.

C. Availability of Funds

1. Amount requested from the Coal Board: \$155,620.87
2. Explain why a coal impact grant is necessary to make the project feasible and affordable.

According to Montana Department of Commerce data, there were 13,387 people residing in Big Horn County when the 2015-2019 American Communities Survey was conducted. This includes 3,609 households, 59% of which are Low and Moderate Income (LMI)⁶. Based on this data set, the median household income in Big Horn County was \$49,859 with 25.5% poverty. The government considers families with housing costs exceeding 30% of household income to be "housing-cost burdened." High housing costs may create financial difficulty in paying for other necessities. 30.7% of families in Big Horn County have mortgage costs exceeding 30% of their household income, while 23% of families pay rent that exceeds 30% of their household income⁷. Given this information, increasing mills and tax rates to fund this project would create financial hardship for a County that is already struggling.

3. What are the other proposed funding sources for the project?

This Coal Board funding request is 70% of the project's total cost. Big Horn County will provide the remaining 30% of the funds needed.

FUNDING SOURCES SUMMARY				
Source	Type of Fund	Amount	Status of Commitment	Loan Rates & Terms
Coal Board	Grant	\$155,620.87	Application submitted on January 27, 2025	Not applicable
Big Horn County Library	Cash	\$20,000	BHCL Capital Project Fund Committed	Not applicable
Insurance Claim on Fire Alarm System	Deductible Traveler's Insurance Claim No. FMEI 112	\$25,000	Committed	Not applicable
Big Horn County Library	Cash	\$1,500	BHCL In-Kind Support Committed	Not applicable

⁴ [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Big Horn County, Montana](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/big-horn-county-montana)

⁵ [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Big Horn County, Montana](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/big-horn-county-montana)

⁶ Accessed online at <https://commerce.mt.gov/Infrastructure-Planning/Resources/Census-and-Target-Rate>.

⁷ 11 Accessed online at <https://headwaterseconomics.org/apps/economic-profile-system/30003>.

4. If a particular proposed source of funding is not obtained, how will the applicant proceed?

If a Coal Impact Grant is not awarded for BHCL Boiler and Fire Alarm Systems Replacement, the County will continue to seek financial assistance in funding the project. This will delay the County's opportunity to reassess its evolving needs, trends, priorities, and resources and leave the County to deal with real health and safety risks to its citizens who utilize the BHCL.

In the past, the BHCL received 12 mills for its operations. However, today, the BHCL receives 5 mills with the County subsidizing 6 mills to the operations. The County is moving towards removing the subsidy in the near future mandating the BHCL to secure additional financial resources. The BHCL plans on hosting future fundraising projects in 2025 with a Spring Pancake Social, Summer Seafood Boiler, and Fundraising Cans (created by children).

D. Degree of Local Effort in Meeting Needs

1. Provide the current fiscal year millage rates for those for the three years immediately preceding the year of application. Please state the mill value for each of those three years. Specifically list how many mills and each year's total mill value. If current millage rates given are lower than the average rates levied during the previous three years, briefly explain why they are lower.

Fiscal Year	Taxable Valuation	% Percent Change from Previous Year	Total Current Year Authorized Mill Levy	Current Year Actual Mill Levy	Carry Forward Mills Available
FY 21-22	\$22,790,474	-1.12%	252.86	164.60	88.26
FY 22-23	\$22,130,068	-2.90%	266.57	165.42	101.15
FY 23-24	\$23,707,343	7.13%	273.10	230.81	42.29
FY 24-25	\$23,425,995	-1.19%	284.39	259.57	24.82

Mill Levy Previous Three Years' Average: 264.18

Taxable Valuation Previous Three Years' Average: \$22,875,961.67

Mills and values for the previous three years were, on average, less than the current year's mills and values.

2. Describe any local efforts to meet the public facility or public service needs by providing financial contributions to the project to the extent possible, such as local funding, donations of land, absorbing some or all administrative costs. For non-profit organizations, describe fund-raising efforts or other in-kind assistance to the proposed project as well as usual program fund-raising efforts.

Big Horn County has previously demonstrated its willingness to contribute financially to the Big Horn County Library by subsidizing the operations with 6 mills of the total 11 mills used to manage the facility and its services. By funding this request with Coal Board Impact Program Grant funds, the Coal Board will allow the BHCL to repair and upgrade its building to address health and safety risks as part of its overall infrastructure improvements.

3. Describe past operation and maintenance budgets and practices over the long-term, including any reserves for repair and replacement.

Big Horn County officials establish the County's budget annually. They create an initial budget by incorporating revenue forecasting and departmental budget requests. During this stage, potential gaps are identified, and essential services are prioritized. Public input and stakeholder engagement are encouraged through public hearings and community meetings. Based on public input, adjustments and revisions are made, which may include reducing funding requests, deferring projects, or proposing alternative revenue sources. The County Commissioners then adopt and implement the final budget, monitoring it throughout the year. The primary goal of the budgeting process is to balance fiscal responsibility with service provision, ensuring that the budget supports community needs within available resources.

4. If there are indications that the problem is not of recent origin, or has developed because of inadequate operation and maintenance practices in the past, explain the circumstances and describe the actions that management will take in the future to assure that the problem will not reoccur.

Routine maintenance is performed on BHCL facility fixtures and equipment as required. With regular use comes wear and tear on most fixtures and equipment, along with advances in technology that make functions obsolete. The outdated and damaged boiler and fire alarm systems are inadequate as a result of the passage of time.

5. If the project involves water, wastewater or solid waste, provide the current and projected monthly household user charges, including operation and maintenance:
- What is the current monthly household user charge? \$ _____
 - What is the projected monthly user charge (including operation and maintenance) when the project is complete? \$ _____

Not Applicable.

6. What are your current debt obligations?

There are no current debt obligations for Big Horn County.

CURRENT DEBT SUMMARY FOR BIG HORN COUNTY								
Year Issued	Purpose	Type of Bond/ Security	Amount	Maturity Date (mo/yr)	Debt Holder	Coverage Required	Annual Payment Amount	Outstanding Balance
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

7. **What are your current assets?**

Based on the Statement of Net Position included in the audit completed 03/22/2024 for the year ending 06/30/2023, Big Horn County's assets are as follows:

Cash and equivalents	\$7,319,639
Investments	\$11,023,244
Receivables	
<i>Taxes and assessments</i>	\$1,832,632
<i>Ambulance (net allowance for uncollectibles of \$4,682,407)</i>	\$578,725
Governments	\$936,509
Other	\$24,564
Inventories	\$456,695
Prepays	\$838,762
Capital assets	
Land	\$4,783,041
Capital assets, net of accumulated depreciation	\$41,391,902
TOTAL ASSETS	\$69,185,713

Source: Statement of Net Position for Year Ending 06/30/2023 <https://mtlgsb.my.site.com/s/auditreport/a09Hs00000bFkSbIAK/fy2023-big-horn-county?tabset-76678=2>

8. Is the applicant in compliance with the auditing and annual financial reporting requirements provided for in the Montana Single Audit Act, 2-7-501 to 522, MCA? (Tribal governments must comply with auditing and reporting requirements provided for in OMB Circular A-133).

Yes X No Date of last completed audit or financial report March 25, 2024

9. If there have been audit findings within the last five years, have they been satisfactorily addressed?

Findings from the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 audit include:

- Segregation of Duties: Unresolved, repeat from previous audit for year ending 06/30/2022
- Equipment Purchases Not Bid: Unresolved, repeat from previous audit for year ending 06/30/2022
- Credit Card Processing
- Voted Levy Calculations
- Minutes: Unresolved, repeat from previous audit for year ending 06/30/2022
- Noncompliance with Procurement and Suspension and Debarment
- Requirements, Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds: Unresolved, repeat from previous audit for year ending 06/30/2022
- Records Management: Unresolved, repeat from previous audit for year ending 06/30/2022
- Grant Management
- Year-End Inventory Not Conducted
- Budgets: Unresolved, repeat from previous audit for year ending 06/30/2022
- Justice of the Peace: Unresolved, repeat from previous audit for year ending 06/30/2022
- Elected Official Wages
- Budget Amendments: Unresolved, repeat from previous audit for year ending 06/30/2022

Big Horn County has a corrective action plan in place with a proposed completion date of 03/31/2024 to address these findings.

Findings from the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 audit not yet listed include:

- Single Audit Reporting Package: Resolved
- Sheriff Longevity: Resolved

Big Horn County has a corrective action plan in place with a proposed completion date of 03/31/2024 to address these findings.

10. Additional information supporting the DEGREE OF LOCAL EFFORT IN MEETING NEEDS.

As reported by the Montana Department of Revenue, Property Assessment Division, Big Horn County's median residential property value in 2023 was \$83,750, which is a 25% increase from the previous year⁸. Higher property values translate to higher property taxes. The median value measures the "middle" value, meaning that half of the values are higher than the median and half of the values are lower.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, median household incomes for Big Horn County were 23.4% lower than that of Montana and 35.6% lower than that of the U.S. Additionally, the percentage of persons in poverty in Big Horn County are approximately twice that of the state and national percentages.

E. Planning & Management

1. Describe how your grant request reasonably fits into an overall plan for the orderly management of the existing or contemplated growth or decline problems related to coal impacts.

Due to declining revenues from reduced coal mining and a shrinking tax base from population loss, Big Horn Library County must be granted financial support to upgrade, modernize, and install new boiler and fire alarm systems. This grant request will help the County fund this essential infrastructure need for a historic building that offers priceless resources and services for the most vulnerable population. The grant's impact will be a tremendous endeavor in supporting local services and public facilities. Given the volatility of the coal industry, securing financial support now is urgent in the BHCL plan to enhance its facility and services.

2. Describe how the proposed project is consistent with current plans.
Plans may include a local capital improvements plan, growth policy, transportation plan, comprehensive economic development plan, or any other applicable plan.

Big Horn County Growth Policy 2014

Big Horn County was recently awarded a Coal Board Impact Grant to update the 2014 Growth Policy. This has begun and will continue throughout the calendar year with the help of Beartooth Resource, Conservation, and Development (RC&D).

⁸ Accessed online at <https://mtrevenue.dev.wpengine.com/dor-publications/median-property-value-changes-bycounty/#2023ResidentialProperty>.

Big Horn County Comprehensive Capital Improvements Plan (CCIP)

The 2014 Growth Policy was used as the primary basis in the formulation of the 2020 Comprehensive Capital Improvements Plan (CCIP). Many of the individual projects identified in the CCIP coincide with the County goals presented in the Growth Policy, including:

- Providing for the long-term infrastructure needs of the County and;
- Providing for compatibility of land uses with consideration of public health and safety, provision of adequate infrastructure, and character of the surrounding area.

The Big Horn County Comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan does not specifically address the replacement of the library boiler system and fire alarm system; however, the CIP states “A capital improvement plan identifies the county needs with respect to capital improvements, estimates costs of the needs, identifies potential sources of funding to meet those needs, prioritizes the needs, and establishes a schedule or time frame for implementing the needs.”

Beartooth Resource, Conservation, and Development (RC&D) Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

Big Horn County is an active member of the Beartooth RC&D Economic Development District. The 2022-2027 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) developed by the District includes a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis. The analysis identified two threats aligned with the decrease in coal development in the region, including:

- Natural resource regulation and pressure to reduce fossil fuel usage, potentially causing higher base load cost for industry and reducing tax revenue, and;
- Reduction in revenue for local and state governing bodies.

The CEDS outlines goals that address the SWOT. Workforce development is one of these goals. Strategies to address this goal include improving communication and collaboration with regional stakeholders to increase the alignment of education, industry, and workforce development. One way to do this is by encouraging County programs to integrate Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) into educational services. Quality of life is another CEDS goal. Strategies to address this goal include providing equitable access to childcare and quality education. Action steps to achieve this goal include bolstering library and other County programs to obtain grants to improve literacy, counseling, training, and facilities and supporting afterschool programs that improve students’ skills and job readiness. These strategies and action steps cannot be implemented at the Big Horn County Library if it is unsafe or has to close due to lack of heat resulting from malfunctioning boilers.

This project will follow the guidelines set forth in Montana Code Annotated 2023, Title 76, Chapter 1, Part 6 and evaluate existing community conditions for the required elements of the Growth Policy, which include population, land use, housing, economic development, local services, public facilities, natural resources, and other unique characteristics and features of the County.

APPENDIX B

For guidance on the required elements of any of the below report types, please follow the links. Equipment purchases do not require any of these report types.

Depending on the type of project application being submitted and components/complexity of the problems and proposed solutions, your application may be required to provide one of these following reports:

- ☐ [Preliminary Architectural Report \(PAR\)](#)
- ☐ [Preliminary Engineering Reports \(PER\)](#)
- ☐ Technical Memorandum (see below)

Technical Memo Requirements

NOTE: a technical memo is a shortened version of a standard Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) or Preliminary Architectural Report (PAR). The complexity of the proposed project will determine which of the three documents may be apply to the project. Please contact staff.

Required Elements

- 1) Project Overview (problem definition)
- 2) Alternatives considered
- 3) Cost benefit analysis
- 4) Discussion
- 5) Conclusions

Exhibit A

RCI Energy, Inc.
Hardin, MT 59034

Invoice

Date	Invoice #
11/13/2024	5590

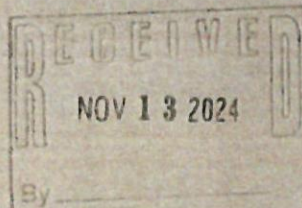
Phone #	406-665-4275
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Bill To
Big Horn County Library PO Box 908 Hardin, MT 59034

Thank You for Your Business.

Project/Job	P.O./W.O. #	Terms
Library		Net 30

Date	Description	Quantity	Rate	Amount
10/25/2024	Hy Vent 1/8 NPT	1.00	28.55	28.55
10/25/2024	Hy Vent 1/4 NPT	1.00	102.67	102.67
10/25/2024	Boiler start up, went through sequence of operation, set up new pump speed. (Nick)	2.00	125.00	250.00
10/25/2024	Boiler start up, set up pump speed. Boiler supply return water targeted at 20 degrees differential. Okay at this time. Pump speed set at 1 (Will)	2.00	125.00	250.00
1.5% Finance Charge on Accounts After 30 Days		Total	\$631.22	



11/15/24 447

RCI Energy, Inc.
Hardin, MT 59034

Invoice

Date	Invoice #
9/18/2024	5482

Phone #	406-665-4275
---------	--------------

Bill To
Big Horn County Library PO Box 908 Hardin, MT 59034

Thank You for Your Business.

		Project/Job	P.O./W.O. #	Terms
		Library		Net 30
Date	Description	Quantity	Rate	Amount
6/7/2024	Customer called stating pump making loud noise. Trouble shot and found faulty pump bearings. Pump design and research of air handling equipment. Ordered replacement materials. (Nick)	3.50	125.00	437.50
8/20/2024	Pump layout for building. Primary hydronic air handler (Nick)	2.00	125.00	250.00
9/4/2024	Drained Boiler system, removed old pump and flanges (Will)	4.00	125.00	500.00
9/6/2024	Piped in new pump (Will)	4.00	125.00	500.00
9/6/2024	Pump flange installation	2.50	125.00	312.50
9/6/2024	High Velocity forged brass pump flange	2.00	266.17	532.34
9/6/2024	UPS42-100SF 3 speed stainless steel circulator pump 115v 9h IMU	2.00	1,286.00	2,572.00
2220.				
SEP 20 2024				
1.5% Finance Charge on Accounts After 30 Days		Total	\$5,104.34	

9/30/24

Encode Corporation
111 Florine Lane
Billings, MT 59101-3409
Tel. 406-245-2520
encode@encodecorp.com



PLEASE PAY BY

01/17/2024

AMOUNT

\$826.82

INVOICE DATE

12/18/2023

INVOICE NO. 44558

Big Horn County Commissioners
Big Horn County - Hardin
Board of Commissioners
PO Box 908
Hardin MT 59034-0908

FUND _____
ACCOUNT _____
OBJECT _____
INITIAL _____
DATE _____

Job No.: 9062
Site: Library
Job Name: Pump for Library Leaking
Site Contact: Austin
Site Phone: 406-679-2411
Order No.: Austin

Description

Austin called, and reported a pump leaking at the Big Horn County Library.

10/30/2023 Robert P Victor

Looked at leaking pump. Ordered Rebuild kit.

11/09/2023 Robert P Victor

Re-built pump and re-installed.

Commercial - Service

Item	Quantity	Unit Price	Total
Flange Gasket Set	1.00	\$21.42	\$21.42
Seal Kit for PL-55B	1.00	\$284.90	\$284.90
Body Gasket	1.00	\$10.50	\$10.50
Regular Time	6.00 hrs	\$85.00	\$510.00
Total			\$826.82
Incl. Tax of			\$0.00

Please pay from invoice. No statement will be issued. Thank you.

Sub-Total ex Tax	\$826.82
Tax	\$0.00
Total Inc Tax	\$826.82
Amount Applied	\$0.00
Balance Due	\$826.82

How To Pay



Mail

Detach this section and mail check to

Encode Corporation
111 Florine Lane
Billings, MT 59101-3409



Credit Card (MasterCard or Visa)

Pay Online encodecorp.simpresulte.com/payment/

Please call 406-245-2520 to pay over the phone.

INVOICE NO. 44558

DUE DATE: 01/17/2024 AMOUNT DUE: \$826.82



proposal

Prepared By:

Mountain Alarm - Billings
Shane Brown
Life Safety Specialist - Commercial
3477 Mountain Pass Road
Billings, MT, 59102
406-245-4945 1177
406-248-7698
shaneb@mountainalarm.com

Big Horn County Library (Fire) Upgrade
419 N Custer Ave
Hardin, MT 59034
Proposal 179746-1-0

Submitted: 1/21/2025

Big Horn County Library-Fire
Anika Risener
406-665-9743
arisener@bighorncountymt.gov

1-888-349-3455 • MOUNTAINALARM.COM

The Leader in Fire, Life Safety, and Security Solutions

SCOPE OF WORK

This proposal is to replace the entire fire system with a new fire code approved system. Included in the price is parts, labor, programming and testing of the new system.

The current panel was damaged due to a water leak. Unfortunately, due to the age of the panel it is discontinued and can no longer be replaced or supported. That means we can not put a replacement into its place and all of the current fire devices are not compatible with a new panel.

In situations like this we are required to put in a new system that meets current fire codes. That means we will need to remove old devices, run all new wiring and put up new devices.

This new system is still subject to AHJ approval.

If any other parts or labor are required to complete the project the additional cost would be on a change order at time plus materials.

INVESTMENT

Fire

QTY	Description
1	Vigilant FACP W/ Enclosure
1	Dialer/Modem two telephone line connections
20	DET, INTEL, SMOKE, OPTI
1	ADDRESSABLE DUCT SMOKE DETECTOR
1	Air Sampling Tube 42"
1	LCD, ANNUM, W/COMM CNTRL, RED, EN
14	ADDR PULL DBL ACT KEY RESET
4	Control Relay Module, Standard Mount
13	Indoor 2-Wire LED Horn Strobe, Wall Mount, Red
3	Strobe, Standard-candela, Indoor, Ceiling Mount
10	Wire, 16/2 Strand Non Shield Plenum
1	14/2 Fire Plenum 1000 Ft. White

System Investment

Total Equipment	\$11,970.59
Total Labor	\$29,808.00
Total Proposal Amount	\$45,209.41

THIS IS NOT AN INVOICE. DO NOT PAY. INVOICE TO BE PROVIDED.

Deposit Due in Advance	\$22,604.70
Balance Due Upon Completion	\$22,604.71

ACCEPTANCE OF PROPOSAL

SYSTEM TOTAL

\$45,209.41

Acceptance of proposal - The above prices, specifications, and conditions are satisfactory and are hereby accepted (subject to credit approval.) You are authorized to do the work as specified.

Pricing is valid for 7 days from the date proposal was submitted to contractor/customer.

Progress Billing will be applied to this proposal.

Big Horn County Library-Fire

Company

Date

Mountain Alarm - Billings

Company

Date

Authorized Signature

Authorized Signature

Printed Name

Title

Printed Name

Title

406-665-9743

Phone

Fax

406-245-4946 1177

Phone

406-248-7698

Fax

arisener@bighorncountymt.gov

Email

shaneb@mountainalarm.com

Email

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

This proposal is subject to the Pye-Barker General Terms and Conditions located at <https://pyebarkerfs.com/generalterms>. By signing or receiving services under this proposal, you acknowledge that you have reviewed such terms and conditions and that they will be incorporated into the proposal by reference. This proposal, including the incorporated General Terms and Conditions, contains the complete and final agreement between the parties with respect to the subject matter hereof.

Encode Corporation
111 Florine Lane
Billings, MT 59101-3409
Tel. 406-245-2520
encode@encodecorp.com



CUSTOMER QUOTATION NO. 1412

Big Horn County Commissioners
Big Horn County - Hardin
Board of Commissioners
PO Box 908
Hardin MT 59034-0908

Quote No: 1412
Quote Name: Boiler Replacement
Site: Road Department
Site Contact:
Date: 06/07/2023
Valid Until: 06/10/2023

Description

Encode Corporation proposes to provide and install two new Lochinvar boilers, one 400K BTU and one 600K BTU. The 400K BTU boiler will heat the building when there is a light load. As the temperature outside gets colder and the 400K unit cannot keep up, the 600K BTU boiler will come on and the 400K unit will shut down. As the outside temperature continues to drop, the 600K and 400K boilers will both run when needed and will give you three stages of heating and the most efficient use of the boilers. Existing pumps will be re-used. Electrical is included. Gas piping to the building is not included and is by others.

This includes:

Boilers, Permit, Valves, Switches, Controls, Sensors, Expansion tank, Neutralization kits, Piping (water and gas inside the building), Insulation, Freight, Labor, Electrical, Operational start-up and check-out.

Boiler Replacement

Sub-Total ex Tax	\$155,411.46
Tax	\$0.00
Total inc Tax	\$155,411.46

Exhibit B



STATE OF MONTANA
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
DIVISION OF CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION
FIRE PREVENTION AND INVESTIGATION SECTION

Keith Kober
Deputy State Fire Marshal
Billings, Mt 59107
1-406-896-4388
406-439-1600
Keith.kober@mt.gov

Fire Inspection
01-13-2025

Inspection Number: **01-13-2025T0736Kober**
Occupancy Inspected: **Hardin Library**
Occupancy Classification: **Assembly**
Occupancy Address: **419 N Custer Ave, Hardin, MT, 59034, USA**
City: **Hardin**
Proprietor: **Anika Reisner**
(RP) Phone: **(406) 665-1808**
(RP) Email: **arisener@bighorncountymt.gov**

A fire inspection was conducted at the location referenced above to identify violation(s) of the Fire Code adopted by the State of Montana. This document serves as written notice of the inspection. You are ordered to correct all listed violation(s) within _____ days. A follow-up inspection may occur at this time to ensure compliance and update records. Failure to comply will result in additional action as required by law including prosecution for a misdemeanor offence in accordance with MCA TITLE 50, Chapter 61.

Owner/Employee: Anika Risener

Inspector: Keith Kober

AR-

Keith Kober

Violation 1031: Escape/Rescue Windows

See IFC 2021 section 1031 for full text.

Inspector Notes: When upgrading alarm system add automatic door closers (magnetic release) to doors

Violation 1013.1/1013.3: Exit Signs Required; directional signs required illuminated

IFC 2021, 1013.1 Where required. Exits and exit access doors shall be marked by an approved exit sign readily visible from any direction of egress travel. The path of egress travel to exits and within exits shall be marked by readily visible exit signs to clearly indicate the direction of egress travel in cases where the exit or the path of egress travel is not immediately visible to the occupants. Intervening means of egress doors within exits shall be marked by exit signs. Exit sign placement shall be such that any point in an exit access corridor or exit passageway is within 100 feet (30480 mm) or the listed viewing distance of the sign, whichever is less, from the nearest visible exit sign. (See IFC 2021 Section 1013.1 for exceptions.)

1013.3 Illumination. Exit signs shall be internally or externally illuminated

Inspector Notes: Replace batteries in exit signs or replace fixture

Violation 907: Fire Alarm Systems

IFC 2021, 907.1 General. This section covers the application, installation, performance and maintenance of fire alarm systems and their components in new and existing buildings and structures. The requirements of Section 907.2 are applicable to new buildings and structures. The requirements of Section 907.9 are applicable to existing buildings and structures.

Inspector Notes: Alarm panel not working due to water damage. Needs to be serviced and brought up to code

Violation 315.3: Disorderly Housekeeping

IFC 2021, 315.3 Storage in buildings. Storage of materials in buildings shall be orderly and stacks shall be stable. Storage of combustible materials shall be separated from heaters or heating devices by distance or shielding so that ignition cannot occur.

Image for Violation 907

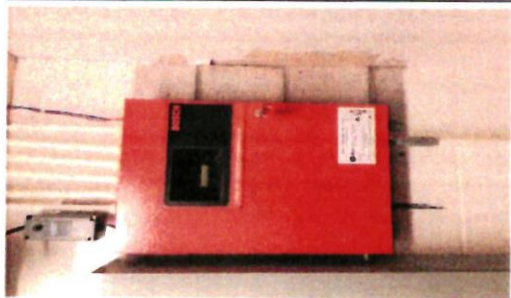


Image for Violation 315.3



**Sample of a resolution
to accept the determination that (level of environment finding) is appropriate for
the (applicant, type of project)**

WHEREAS, the (Name of applicant) has completed an assessment to identify potential environmental impacts to the (describe purpose of project);

WHEREAS, the draft Environmental Assessment was made available for public comment and the findings were presented and reviewed at a public meeting;

WHEREAS, no substantive public comment was received, (or public comment was received and responded to);

WHEREAS, The (Name of applicant) has determined that the (type of Project) will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment and accordingly the (Name of Applicant) has determined an Environmental Impact Statement (or Environmental Assessment and EIS if project is Categorical Exclusion); is not necessary;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the (Council, Board, Commissioners) as follows;

That (Name of Applicant), Montana adopts the final Environmental Assessment for the (type of project).

Passes and approved on this date of (date)

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Attested: _____

Environmental Assessment

Each Coal Board applicant must either identify that the proposed project qualifies for an exclusion from MEPA or identify and analyze the environmental impacts of the proposed project.

Any time the applicant proposes substantial changes to the project, after submission of the application but either before or after final ranking by the Department or approval by the Legislature and Governor, the Department will require the applicant to repeat its environmental review as set forth above.

The checklist contained within the *Uniform Application for Montana Public Facility Projects, Tenth Edition*, must be submitted with the Coal Board application. Please use the heading for the environmental assessment as shown below. Letters to the appropriate state and federal agencies must be sent and documented.

It is the requirement to complete the entire environmental review process and include all documentation with the application. The responsibility for completing the environmental assessment rests with the grantee. Please refer to environmental review language for specific details regarding completion of the entire environmental process.

The 'environmental review form' must be completed for Coal Board projects and submitted with the construction grant application. The form must be prepared by someone with a thorough knowledge of the project, expertise in environmental issues, and authority to sign for the applicant.

Please ensure all portions of the environmental process are completed prior to application submission.

- a. Environmental Assessment Checklist
- b. Environmental Review form
- c. Final Action taken by resolution or documented local decision

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

NAME OF PROJECT: Big Horn County Library Boiler and Fire Alarm Systems Replacement Project

PROPOSED ACTION: Replace Out Dated and Damaged Boiler System and Fire Alarm System

LOCATION: Big Horn County, Montana

Key Letter:

N: No Impact; **B:** Potentially Beneficial; **A:** Potentially Adverse; **P:** Approval/Permits Required; **M:** Mitigation Required

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Key	1	Soil Suitability, Topographic and/or Geologic Constraints (e.g., soil slump, steep slopes, subsidence, seismic activity)
N		Response and source of information: NA
Key	2	Hazardous Facilities (e.g., power lines, hazardous waste sites, acceptable distance from explosive and flammable hazards including chemical/petrochemical storage tanks, underground fuel storage tanks, and related facilities such as natural gas storage facilities & propane storage tanks)
N		Response and source of information: NA
Key	3	Effects of Project on Surrounding Air Quality or Any Kind of Effects of Existing Air Quality on Project (e.g., dust, odors, emissions)
N		Response and source of information: NA
Key	4	Groundwater Resources & Aquifers (e.g., quantity, quality, distribution, depth to groundwater, sole source aquifers)
N		Response and source of information: NA
Key	5	Surface Water/Water Quality, Quantity & Distribution (e.g., streams, lakes, storm runoff, irrigation systems, canals)
N		Response and source of information: NA
Key	6	Floodplains & Floodplain Management (Identify any flood plains within one mile of the boundary of the project.)
N		Response and source of information: NA
Key	7	Wetlands Protection (Identify any wetlands within one mile of the boundary of the project.)
N		Response and source of information: NA
Key	8	Agricultural Lands, Production, & Farmland Protection (e.g., grazing, forestry, cropland, prime or unique agricultural lands) (Identify any prime or important farm ground or forest lands within one mile of the boundary of the project.)
N		Response and source of information: NA
Key	9	Vegetation & Wildlife Species & Habitats, including Fish and Sage Grouse (e.g., terrestrial, avian and aquatic life and habitats) https://sagegrouse.mt.gov
N		Response and source of information: NA
Key	10	Unique, Endangered, Fragile, or Limited Environmental Resources, Including Endangered Species (e.g., plants, fish or wildlife)
N		Response and source of information: NA
Key	11	Unique Natural Features (e.g., geologic features)
N		Response and source of information: NA

Key	12	Access to, and Quality of, Recreational & Wilderness Activities, Public Lands and Waterways, and Public Open Space
N		Response and source of information: NA
HUMAN ENVIRONMENT		
Key	1	Visual Quality – Coherence, Diversity, Compatibility of Use and Scale, Aesthetics
N		Response and source of information: NA
Key	2	Nuisances (e.g., glare, fumes)
N		Response and source of information: NA
Key	3	Noise -- suitable separation between noise sensitive activities (such as residential areas) and major noise sources (aircraft, highways & railroads)
N		Response and source of information: NA
Key	4	Historic Properties, Cultural, and Archaeological Resources
N		Response and source of information: NA
Key	5	Changes in Demographic (population) Characteristics (e.g., quantity, distribution, density)
N		Response and source of information: NA
Key	6	General Housing Conditions - Quality, Quantity, Affordability
N		Response and source of information: NA
Key	7	Displacement or Relocation of Businesses or Residents
N		Response and source of information: NA
Key	8	Public Health and Safety
N		Response and source of information: NA
Key	9	Lead Based Paint and/or Asbestos
N		Response and source of information: NA
Key	10	Local Employment & Income Patterns - Quantity and Distribution of Employment, Economic Impact: NA
N		Response and source of information: NA
Key	11	Local & State Tax Base & Revenues
N		Response and source of information: NA
Key	12	Educational Facilities - Schools, Colleges, Universities
N		Response and source of information: NA
Key	13	Commercial and Industrial Facilities - Production & Activity, Growth or Decline.
N		Response and source of information: NA
Key	14	Health Care – Medical Services: NA
N		Response and source of information: NA
Key	15	Social Services – Governmental Services (e.g., demand on)
N		Response and source of information: NA
Key	16	Social Structures & Mores (Standards of Social Conduct/Social Conventions)
N		Response and source of information: NA
Key	17	Land Use Compatibility (e.g., growth, land use change, development activity, adjacent land uses and potential conflicts)
N		Response and source of information: NA
Key	18	Energy Resources - Consumption and Conservation
N		Response and source of information: NA

Key N	19	Solid Waste Management <i>Response and source of information: NA</i>
Key N	20	Wastewater Treatment - Sewage System <i>Response and source of information: NA</i>
Key N	21	Storm Water – Surface Drainage <i>Response and source of information: NA</i>
Key N	22	Community Water Supply <i>Response and source of information: NA</i>
Key N	23	Public Safety – Police <i>Response and source of information: NA</i>
Key N	24	Fire Protection – Hazards <i>Response and source of information: NA</i>
Key N	25	Emergency Medical Services <i>Response and source of information: NA</i>
Key N	26	Parks, Playgrounds, & Open Space <i>Response and source of information: NA</i>
Key N	27	Cultural Facilities, Cultural Uniqueness & Diversity <i>Response and source of information: NA</i>
Key N	28	Transportation Networks and Traffic Flow Conflicts (e.g., rail; auto including local traffic; airport runway clear zones - avoidance of incompatible land use in airport runway clear zones) <i>Response and source of information: NA</i>
Key N	29	Consistency with Local Ordinances, Resolutions, or Plans (e.g., conformance with local comprehensive plans, zoning, or capital improvement plans) <i>Response and source of information: NA</i>
Key N	30	Is There a Regulatory Action on Private Property Rights as a Result of this Project? (Consider options that reduce, minimize, or eliminate the regulation of private property rights.) <i>Response and source of information: NA</i>

COUNTY OF BIG HORN, MONTANA

RESOLUTION 2025- 4

PREAMBLE:

A Resolution to accept the determination that a finding of no significant impact is appropriate to replace communication hardware and software in Big Horn Hospital.

RECITALS:

In accordance with MCA 7-5-2101(1), the board of county commissioners has jurisdiction and power, under such limitations and restrictions as are prescribed by law, to represent the county and have the care of the county property and the management of the business and concerns of the county.

Big Horn County has completed an assessment to identify potential environmental impacts to replacing communication hardware and software in Big Horn Hospital.

The draft Environmental Assessment was made available for public comment and the findings were presented and reviewed at a public meeting.

No substantive public comment was received.

Big Horn County has determined that replacing communication hardware and software in Big Horn Hospital will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment and accordingly Big Horn County has determined an Environmental Impact Statement is not necessary.

THEREFORE:

The Board of Commissioners, Big Horn County, Montana, hereby resolves that the final Environmental Assessment for replacing communication hardware and software in Big Horn Hospital is adopted.

EFFECTIVE:

This Resolution shall be effective immediately.

ENACTED:

This 23rd day of January, 2025, in Hardin, Montana.

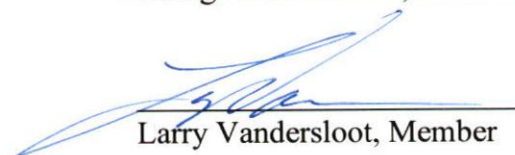
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BIG HORN COUNTY, MONTANA



Lawrence Big Hair, Presiding Officer



George Real Bird III, Member



Larry Vandersloot, Member

ATTEST:



Peri Schenderline

Deputy Clerk+Recorder

THE COAL IMPACT GRANT APPLICATION FORM SUBMITTED BY BIG HORN COUNTY

CERTIFICATION

The chief elected official or executive officer of the applicant must sign the application certifying that to the best of the official's knowledge and belief, the information provided in the application and the attached documents is true and correct.

The chief elected official or executive officer of the applicant must also certify that, in accordance with Section 90-6-205, MCA, the applicant is eligible for a Coal Impact Grant and has the authority to administer and make expenditures to provide for the proposed service or facility.

CERTIFICATION

To the best of my knowledge and belief, the information provided in this application and in the attached documents is true and correct.

In accordance with Section 90-6-205, MCA, the applicant is eligible for Coal Board grants and has the statutory authority to make expenditures to provide for the particular service or facility.

Name: *L. Big Hair*

Title: *commission chairman*

Signature: *L. Big Hair*

Date: *1-23-2025*

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

NAME OF PROJECT:	Communication Upgrade in Big Horn Hospital
PROPOSED ACTION:	Acquisition of New Communication Equipment
LOCATION:	Hardin _____, Montana

Key Letter:

N: No Impact; **B:** Potentially Beneficial; **A:** Potentially Adverse; **P:** Approval/Permits Required; **M:** Mitigation Required

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Key	1	Soil Suitability, Topographic and/or Geologic Constraints (e.g., soil slump, steep slopes, subsidence, seismic activity)
		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
N		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	2	Hazardous Facilities (e.g., power lines, hazardous waste sites, acceptable distance from explosive and flammable hazards including chemical/petrochemical storage tanks, underground fuel storage tanks, and related facilities such as natural gas storage facilities & propane storage tanks)
		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
N		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	3	Effects of Project on Surrounding Air Quality or Any Kind of Effects of Existing Air Quality on Project (e.g., dust, odors, emissions)
		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
N		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	4	Groundwater Resources & Aquifers (e.g., quantity, quality, distribution, depth to groundwater, sole source aquifers)
		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
N		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.

Key Letter:		
N: No Impact; B: Potentially Beneficial; A: Potentially Adverse; P: Approval/Permits Required; M: Mitigation Required		
Key	5	Surface Water/Water Quality, Quantity & Distribution (e.g., streams, lakes, storm runoff, irrigation systems, canals)
		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
N		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	6	Floodplains & Floodplain Management (Identify any floodplains within one mile of the boundary of the project.)
		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
N		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	7	Wetlands Protection (Identify any wetlands within one mile of the boundary of the project.)
		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
N		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	8	Agricultural Lands, Production, & Farmland Protection (e.g., grazing, forestry, cropland, prime or unique agricultural lands) (Identify any prime or important farm ground or forest lands within one mile of the boundary of the project.)
		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
N		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	9	Vegetation & Wildlife Species & Habitats, including Fish and Sage Grouse (e.g., terrestrial, avian and aquatic life and habitats) https://sagegrouse.mt.gov
		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
N		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	10	Unique, Endangered, Fragile, or Limited Environmental Resources, Including Endangered Species (e.g., plants, fish or wildlife)
		<i>Response and source of information:</i>

Key Letter:		
N: No Impact; B: Potentially Beneficial; A: Potentially Adverse; P: Approval/Permits Required; M: Mitigation Required		
N		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	11	Unique Natural Features (e.g., geologic features)
		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
N		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	12	Access to, and Quality of, Recreational & Wilderness Activities, Public Lands and Waterways, and Public Open Space
		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
N		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
HUMAN ENVIRONMENT		
Key	1	Visual Quality – Coherence, Diversity, Compatibility of Use and Scale, Aesthetics
		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
N		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	2	Nuisances (e.g., glare, fumes)
		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
N		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	3	Noise -- suitable separation between noise sensitive activities (such as residential areas) and major noise sources (aircraft, highways & railroads)
		<i>Response and source of information:</i>

Key Letter:		
N: No Impact; B: Potentially Beneficial; A: Potentially Adverse; P: Approval/Permits Required; M: Mitigation Required		
N		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	4	Historic Properties, Cultural, and Archaeological Resources
		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
N		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	5	Changes in Demographic (population) Characteristics (e.g., quantity, distribution, density)
		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
N		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	6	General Housing Conditions - Quality, Quantity, Affordability
		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
N		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	7	Displacement or Relocation of Businesses or Residents
		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
N		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	8	Public Health and Safety
		<i>Response and source of information:</i>

Key Letter:		
N: No Impact; B: Potentially Beneficial; A: Potentially Adverse; P: Approval/Permits Required; M: Mitigation Required		
B		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support. The project will increase the hospital's capacity to enhance patient care and improve operational efficiency.
Key	9	Lead Based Paint and/or Asbestos
		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
N		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	10	Local Employment & Income Patterns - Quantity and Distribution of Employment, Economic Impact
		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
N		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	11	Local & State Tax Base & Revenues
		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
N		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	12	Educational Facilities - Schools, Colleges, Universities
		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
N		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	13	Commercial and Industrial Facilities - Production & Activity, Growth or Decline.
		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
N		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	14	Health Care – Medical Services

Key Letter:		
N: No Impact; B: Potentially Beneficial; A: Potentially Adverse; P: Approval/Permits Required; M: Mitigation Required		
B		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support. The project will increase the hospital's capacity to enhance patient care and improve operational efficiency.
Key	15	Social Services – Governmental Services (e.g., demand on)
N		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	16	Social Structures & Mores (Standards of Social Conduct/Social Conventions)
N		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	17	Land Use Compatibility (e.g., growth, land use change, development activity, adjacent land uses and potential conflicts)
N		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	18	Energy Resources - Consumption and Conservation
N		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	19	Solid Waste Management
N		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.

Key Letter:		
N: No Impact; B: Potentially Beneficial; A: Potentially Adverse; P: Approval/Permits Required; M: Mitigation Required		
Key	20	Wastewater Treatment - Sewage System
N		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	21	Storm Water – Surface Drainage
N		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	22	Community Water Supply
N		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	23	Public Safety – Police
N		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	24	Fire Protection – Hazards
N		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	25	Emergency Medical Services
N		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	26	Parks, Playgrounds, & Open Space

Key Letter:		
N: No Impact; B: Potentially Beneficial; A: Potentially Adverse; P: Approval/Permits Required; M: Mitigation Required		
N		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	27	Cultural Facilities, Cultural Uniqueness & Diversity
N		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	28	Transportation Networks and Traffic Flow Conflicts (e.g., rail; auto including local traffic; airport runway clear zones - avoidance of incompatible land use in airport runway clear zones)
N		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	29	Consistency with Local Ordinances, Resolutions, or Plans (e.g., conformance with local comprehensive plans, zoning, or capital improvement plans)
N		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
		The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.
Key	30	Is There a Regulatory Action on Private Property Rights as a Result of this Project? (consider options that reduce, minimize, or eliminate the regulation of private property rights.)
N		<i>Response and source of information:</i>
		No. The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support.

Environmental Review Form

Please answer the following as they apply to your proposed project:

1. Alternatives: Describe reasonable alternatives to the project.

No reasonable alternatives were identified. The project proposes replacing the current communication system in Big Horn Hospital. The project primarily involves the acquisition of hardware and software, including handsets, badges, switches, and network architecture, as well as licenses, warranties, and technical support. The current system is over 15 years old, and its configuration does not support Caller ID; Enhanced 911 (E911) capabilities to comply with Kari's Law and RAY BAUM's Act; and, newer more cost-effective service deliveries such as Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). The project will increase the hospital's capacity to enhance patient care and improve operational efficiency.

2. Mitigation: Identify any enforceable measures necessary to reduce any impacts to an insignificant level. No enforceable measures were identified.

3. Is an EA or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) required? Describe whether or not an EA or EIS is required and explain in detail why or why not.

An EA or EIS is not required because the project primarily involves the acquisition of capital equipment. The acquisition of capital equipment is categorically exempt from Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) review under Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) 8.2.328(2).

4. Public Involvement: Describe the process followed to involve the public in the proposed project and its potential environmental impacts. Identify the public meetings -- where and when -- the project was considered and discussed, and when the applicant approved the final environmental assessment.

An Environmental Checklist for the project was completed and available for public review and comment January 8 to January 22, 2025 in Big Horn County Commission Chambers located at 121 West 3rd Street Room 302 in Hardin, Montana, 59034. Big Horn County Commissioners reviewed public comment received, heard any additional public comment, and accepted the level of environmental finding for the project at a public meeting on January 23, 2025 at 9:30 A.M. in Commission Chambers.

5. Person(s) Responsible for Preparing: Identify the person(s) responsible for preparation of this checklist: Lori Benner, Contracted Grant Writer

6. Other Agencies: List any state, local, or federal agencies that have over-lapping or additional jurisdiction or environmental review responsibility for the proposed action and the permits, licenses, and other authorizations required; and list any agencies or groups that were contacted or contributed information to this Environmental Assessment(EA). No other agencies were contacted.

Chairman Commission
Authorized Representative, Title

1 - 24 - 2025
Date

L. Benner
Signature of Authorized Representative