

Equipment report, Nov. 13, 2024

Over the last year the station's broadcast antenna at the top of the pine tree has continued to function without problems and there has been no need to climb the tree.

The repaired NiCOM transmitter has continued to function with no problems.

The station bought a low capacity backup power supply on 12/6/23 to protect the station from being put off the air by momentary power outages (also known as 'blinks,') as apparently happened several times last year. No blinks have been noticed since then.

On March 4 a storm caused a 1 hour power outage at the transmitter, putting the station off the air just before 10 pm. Attempts to restart the Zara4 broadcast computer that evening and the next day were unsuccessful. On March 5 I substituted an older computer with limited storage capacity for Zara4 and brought the latter computer home. Ken Skog was unable to get the substitute computer connected to the internet. On March 6 Damon Smith said he had old computers he could donate to the station if we needed one. He stopped by our house around 4 PM that day and was able to get Zara4's Windows operating system loading again by using F2 to setup, Drives to SATA operations, and resetting to Legacy. He also set the 80 GB hard drive to be first in the boot sequence. However, when I reinstalled Zara4 in the Skog garage it had the same problem seen before with a low voltage error message preventing Windows from opening. Damon's changes had been lost, apparently showing that the computer needed a new coin sized CMOS battery on the motherboard. Following Damon's step by step instructions I was able to get Windows on Zara4 to load once more, but only after forcing a shutdown and restarting the computer. Change of computers and Zara4 restart problems resulted in the station being off the air from around 5 PM, until around 9 PM. On March 26 a new CMOS battery was purchased and installed in Zara4 and it has worked ok since then.

During the week ending March 23 there were long periods when attempts to establish a remote connection via AnyDesk failed, with a "This desk is not available" error message. A visit to the garage showed that the broadcast computer was still connected to the internet. The problem corrected itself several times.

During April Zara4 lost its internet connection several times, disrupting the broadcast of some programs. On April 2 the station was off the air briefly for a reboot of the computer, which did not help. Our broadcast equipment includes a Wireless N Mini Pocket Router (model TL-WR700N). When we were attempting to get our Sage Digital ENDEC working with the firmware upgrades bought in March this pocket router had been left hanging in mid air from an extension cord. On April 21 I placed it lying flat on top of our backup power unit. This fixed the problem we had been having with the broadcast computer's internet connection. Also, since then the AnyDesk software has continued to work whenever I needed a remote connection to Zara4, though with the minor stability problems described in last year's equipment report.

On May 13 the needed firmware upgrades for the borrowed Sage ENDEC unit we have been using were successfully installed

On May 21 a storm power outage put the station off the air at 8:25 PM. It was off the air until about 1:30 PM the next day.

On July 1 the station went silent from 4:30:47 until 5 PM due to a programming error.

Bob Park