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## **LAWMAKERS CONSIDER NEW IT DEPT.**

By [Trevor Brown](#)  
[tbrown@wyomingnews.com](mailto:tbrown@wyomingnews.com)

CHEYENNE -- Wyoming officials hope to save millions of dollars by creating a new department that is part of the state's efforts to consolidate and streamline its information technology services.

A legislative panel voted Thursday to sponsor a bill to create the Department of Enterprise Technology Services.

The proposed new department would be headed by the chief information officer and would be responsible for the bulk of the state's information technology work.

The state's Division of Information Technology currently is part of the Department of Administration and Information. In addition, many state agencies have their own dedicated IT staff.

Flint Waters, the state's chief information officer, said creating the new department would help identify staff and services throughout the state that can be consolidated.

He said officials plan to study IT positions to determine if they should be moved to the new agency.

IT staffers who do department-specific work would stay in their current roles, he said.

He said the state stands to save millions of dollars each year by eliminating IT positions that are performing work that overlaps with what is already being done.

He said only vacant positions would be candidates for elimination, and the state does not plan to lay off current IT employees.

"We are trying to do this with a scalpel and some precision in order to save the state money and make it more efficient," he said. "That is the mandate I received from (Gov. Matt Mead), and I think it will lend itself well to a more streamlined and efficient agency with less IT staff around the state."

Waters said another problem that could be solved involves a situation where some agencies hire IT staff, such as computer programmers, to work on a long-term project.

He said many times once the project is completed, the programmers will stay on the state agency's payroll, even though their need is now gone.

With the new department, Waters said the computer programmers could be folded back into the state's pool of staffers so they could be put to work for a different agency.

The Wyoming Legislature's Management Audit Committee made the recommendation to sponsor the bill during its Thursday meeting.

The legislators identified the need to move forward with the consolidation work after it completed an audit of the state's IT services earlier in the year.

Sen. John Schiffer, R-Kaycee, who is co-chairman of the committee, said the reorganization measure would solve many of the inefficiencies that the group found in the audit.

"I think we have a bill that accomplishes what we set out to do," he said. "I think we are on the right track."