

Governor Mead opened the 2018 Budget Session of the Joint Legislature on Monday, February 12th with his eighth and final [State of the State address](#). He encouraged lawmakers to stay focused on diversifying Wyoming's economy, despite the looming \$850M shortfall. Mead started his address by celebrating his accomplishments over the last eight years:

- Downsized government
- Built savings
- Consolidated agency technology practice and creating the Enterprise Technology Services Division
- Created long term policy, including:
 - Energy strategy
 - Water strategy
 - 10 in 10
 - Forest health and outdoor recreation Task Force recommendations
 - ENDOW

Specific to the 2018 budget session, Mead remarked that his proposed biennial budget is \$400M less than the budget proposed just 10 years ago. Over the last two years, over 12% was cut from that budget and he worked to reduce agency rules by 30%. And while the State's savings increased during this time, Mead pushed for better returns for our investments. Yet, he cautioned, "We never want to spend too much, and we haven't – but if we spend too little, that can be a problem too." He asked legislators to use this budget session to make agencies that have been cut too much whole again.

In his \$2.8B budget, he made several recommendations:

- \$105M to local governments
- \$200,000 for senior centers
- \$2.2M to strengthen critical cybersecurity
- Paying off the capitol renovation project
- Money for community college capital construction
- Restoring funds cut from the Livestock Board and continuing funding for the State Fair
- Funding for ENDOW recommendations
- Building computer science into our school standards

The Joint Appropriations Committee finished up work on their proposed budget and will present their budget on the floor of both houses the week of February 19th. Capital Construction will be addressed in mirror bills separate from the budget. Week one ended with the deadline for bills to be introduced and several bills of interest to the Community Colleges died. The House did not have an appetite to increase taxes, and you will see that the JAC recommended diverting several sources of funding to fund K12 education....for now. See the "bills of interest this week" section for more information. The 64th Wyoming Legislature is set to run for 20 days. The House consists of 51 republicans and 9 democrats and the Senate is made up of 27 republicans and 3 democrats.

BILLS OF INTEREST THIS WEEK

[HB1 – General Government Appropriations](#) – The bill appropriates \$2.9B from the General Fund and authorizes 7,377 full-time employees and 304 part-time positions. Of interest to the Community Colleges:

- \$8.8M from the School Foundation Program Reserve Account to the **Excellence in Higher Education Endowment Reserve Account**. There is no expectation of future state transfers, appropriations or other contributions with this appropriation (noted in the bill). Further, UW and the Community Colleges “shall take all necessary steps to align expenditures to accommodate irregular realized investment earnings from the endowment fund”.
- Borrowing authority authorizing the State Treasurer to borrow from the LSRA (rainy day fund) amounts necessary to meet the month-to-month cash flow requirements of the **Hathaway Scholarship Program**.
- Authority for the State Auditor and State Treasurer to borrow up to \$26M from the LSRA to meet cash flow requirements of the **Employees’ and Officials’ Group Health Insurance Plan**.
- **Major maintenance** dollars of \$110M:
 - 42.03% to state construction department for state facilities
 - 37.51% to UW, excluding student housing
 - 20.46% to the Community College districts
 - No later than September 1, 2019, the State Construction Department shall submit to the State Building Commission a recommendation for funding for the biennium beginning July 1, 2020, for major building and facility repair and maintenance for state institutions, UW and the Community Colleges.
 - No later than October 31, 2019, the State Construction Department, UW and the Community Colleges shall report to the State Building Commission and the JAC on the expenditures and commitments made from the appropriations in this year’s budget bill.
- All **bulk computer hardware and operating software** shall be made through the Department of Enterprise Technology Services – applies to all agencies *except* UW and the Community Colleges. The CIO shall collaborate with UW and the Community Colleges to identify opportunities to reduce costs for bulk purchases of computers and operating software.
- \$19M to **ENDOW**
 - \$2M to the Wyoming Business Council for the Wyoming Grown Program
 - \$2M to the Wyoming Business Council to expand broadband connectivity in rural Wyoming
 - \$15M to WYDOT for improvements to commercial air service in Wyoming (if SF40 is enacted into law, this appropriation will go to the Wyoming Commercial Air Service Improvement Account)
 - \$22.5M for any other legislation
- \$5M from the LSRA to the Office of the Governor for a single grant or loan awarded to a Community College for one-year operational costs of an automotive technology trade school (**LCCC acquisition of WyoTech**).

[HB 53 – State Education Program](#) – Amends the State’s K12 standards to require computer science. Also provides that computer science courses may satisfy certain high school graduation requirements and certain Hathaway scholarship requirements. **The bill passed the House Education Committee on Friday 2/16 and was amended to ensure computer science curriculum be housed in the Wyoming Common Core of Knowledge (standards). This bill is like [SF29 – Education Computer Science and Computational Thinking](#) (passed the Senate on Friday 2/16) and is widely supported by industry and the WDE.**

Please visit the [WACCT webpage](#) for the WACCT Talking Points and the 2018 Legislative Tracking Spreadsheet for more information.

BILLS THAT FAILED INTRODUCTION OR WITHDRAWN

Tax bills:

- [HB 43 Tobacco Tax](#)
- [HB 174 Statewide Lodging Tax](#)
- [HB 104 Wind Energy Production Tax](#)

- [HB 182 Property Tax Exemption - Recreational Facilities](#)
- [HB 98 Real Estate Transfer Tax](#)
- [HB 136 Optional Municipal Tax - 2](#)
- [HB 177 Comprehensive Tax Reform](#)
- [HB 184 Sales and Use Tax Rate](#)
- [HB 176 Tax reform 2020 Committee](#)
- [HJ 7 Taxpayer's Bill of Rights](#)

Other bills that died this week:

- [HB 60 Community College Police Officer Retirement](#)
- [HB 82 Community College Tuition – Special Rates](#)
- [HB 132 Non resident tuition and fees](#)
- [HB 137 Wyoming Higher Education Free Speech Protection Act](#)
- [HB 154 Build Wyoming Loan Program](#)
- [HB 165 College entrance exam – written component](#)

IN THE NEWS

[Harshman, Bebout: 2018 Budget Session will work on economic diversification, government efficiency, reducing deficit](#) – 2/16/18 - Casper Star Tribune

[Barron – ENDOW Could be Mead's Legacy](#) – 2/16/2018 – Casper Star Tribune

[UW Faculty Responds to Campus Free Speech Bill](#) – 2/16/18 – Wyoming Tribune Eagle

[Wyo. Senate passes computer science requirements bill on third reading](#) – 2/16/2018 – Wyoming Tribune Eagle

KEY EVENTS OF THE 2018 SESSION:

(20 day session)

- Day 1 Monday, February 12 Session convenes 10:00 a.m.
- Day 3 Wednesday, February 14 Noon deadline for all bill drafts to be in final form at LSO.
- Day 5 Friday, February 16 Last day for bill introductions.
- Day 9 Thursday, February 22 Last day for bills to be reported out of Committee in House of Origin.
- Day 10 Friday, February 23 Last day for Committee of the Whole in House of Origin.
- Monday, February 26 Mid-Session Recess
- Day 11 Tuesday, February 27 Last day for 2nd Reading in House of Origin.
- Day 12 Wednesday, February 28 Last day for 3rd Reading on bills in House of Origin. [CROSS-OVER]
- Day 15 Monday, March 5 Last day for bills to be reported out of Committee in second house.
- Day 16 Tuesday, March 6 Last day for Committee of Whole on bills in second house.
- Day 17 Wednesday, March 7 Last day for 2nd Reading on bills in second house.
- Day 18 Thursday, March 8 Last day for 3rd Reading on bills in second house.
- Day 19 Friday, March 9 Concurrence on Amendments/Joint Conference Committee Reports.
- Day 20 Saturday, March 10 Joint Conference Committee Reports; All JCC Reports due to Front Desk by 2:00 p.m.
- Adjourn by midnight.
- Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday - March 12, 13 and 14 are available if necessary.

WEEKLY CONFERENCE CALL

The remainder of the weekly conference calls will be held on **Fridays at 10am.**

Please call: 800-356-8372 Guest Code: 8867116#