



Fire Business System Whitepaper

FY2023 Decision Unit Request

Idaho Department of Lands requested a FY2023 dedicated fund appropriation of \$1,013,000 to purchase and implement Gold's Fire Business System, an integrated electronic system for managing all aspects of fire billing, invoicing, cost reconciliation, cost sharing, reporting and data warehousing. It integrates with IDL's geographic information system (GIS) as well as the national Integrated Reporting of Wildland-Fire Information (IRWIN) system, automatically prepopulating incident report information from IRWIN for areas protected by IDL.

This decision unit request for dedicated fund money is supported by the Governor and all Land Board members. If this spending authority is granted, IDL will pay for most of the project using funds recovered from suppression cost settlements, monies recovered from individuals who negligently started fires extinguished by IDL on lands we protect.

| FY2023 Decision Unit Request | |
|--------------------------------|-------------|
| Onetime Capital Outlay | \$973,000 |
| Ongoing Operating Expenditures | \$40,000 |
| Total Dedicated Fund Request | \$1,013,000 |

The spending authority requested covers the software, configuration, training and integration with Navision. With regular maintenance, the Gold's Fire Business System will remain viable for at least 20 years.

Western Fire Agencies Universally Adopting Electronic Fire Business Systems

Across the West, states including Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, Nevada, Arizona, and New Mexico have either fully implemented or are in the process of implementing electronic fire business systems. The Gold's system was developed for the State of Utah. Unlike commercial off the shelf billing and accounting software, it meets IDL's and our partners highly specific fire-billing, reporting, invoicing, accounting and cost-sharing needs.

State Controller Approved

Since the business needs fulfilled by the Gold's system cannot be met by the new Luma Enterprise Resource Planning system, the State Controller supports IDL's request to acquire the Gold's system, which in turn connects to Luma through our Navision system. Navision is the core product behind IDL's various other business applications.

Impacts of Paper-Based Obsolescence

Idaho's current paper-based approach to fire business is rapidly becoming obsolete and results in the delayed receipt of payment for reimbursable costs from other jurisdictions and the federal government. The effort required to pay Idaho's fire cooperators in a timely manner – rural and municipal fire departments, and private contractors – is herculean and likely unsustainable without implementing an electronic system. These small public entities and private firms cannot bear the financial strain caused by delayed reimbursements. Local fire departments support IDL's acquisition of the Gold's system for this reason. It will also allow these local cooperators and other vendors to submit invoices to IDL electronically, saving additional time.

Given the complexity of fire billing transactions, shifting paper-based records between cooperators and various jurisdictions increases the likelihood of records crucial for receiving payment to be lost and makes auditing transactions difficult. Idaho is also one of just two states that span multiple Forest Service regions, further complicating settling fire costs. As other Western states implement electronic fire business systems, they are devoting fewer resources to and deprioritizing processing paper-based transactions like Idaho uses. This erodes our ability to be reimbursed in a timely manner and pay our local fire departments and vendors quickly.

Rapid Fire Settlement, Receipt of Payments

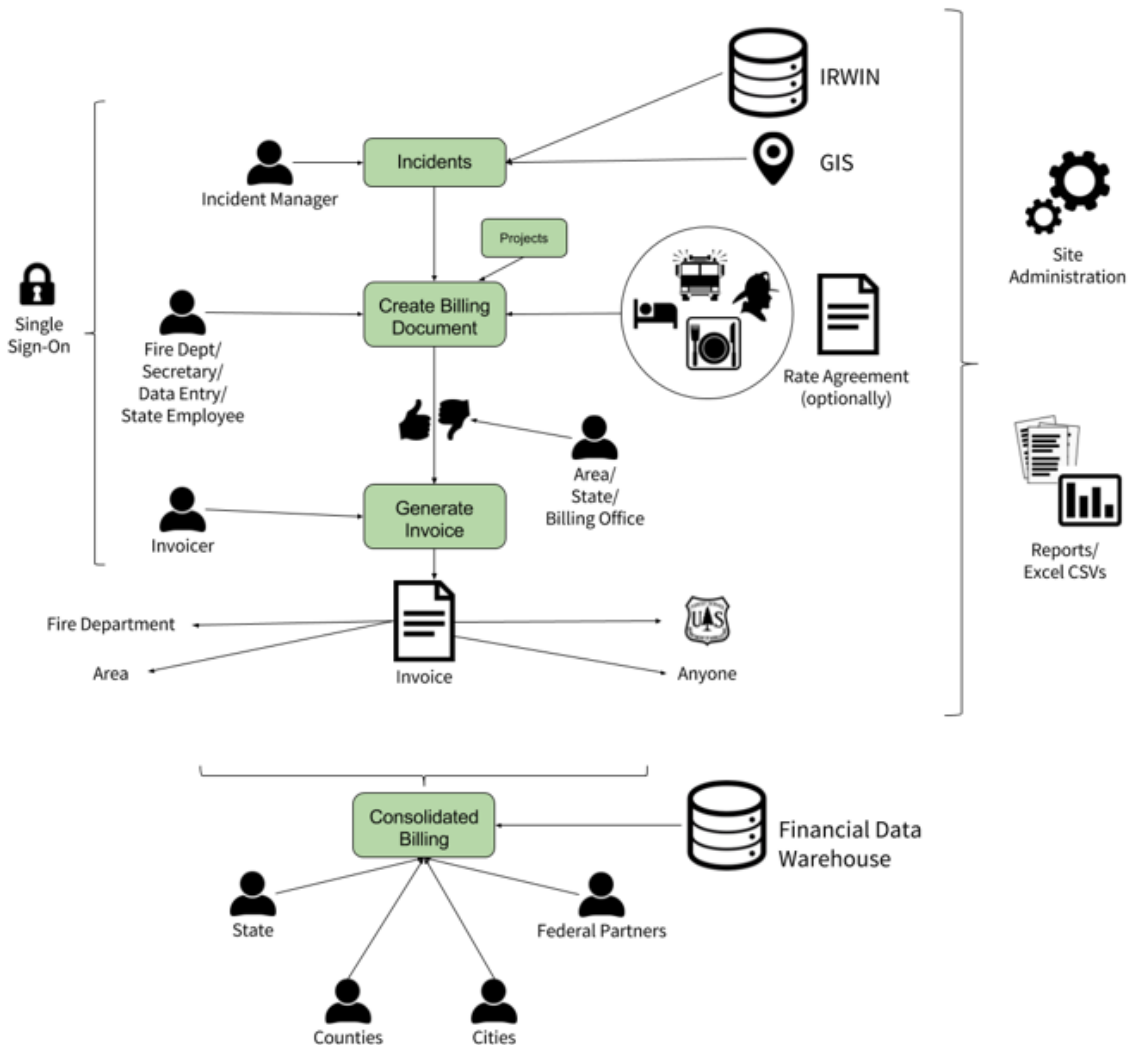
States that have already transitioned to electronic fire business systems meet with the Forest Service in late winter to settle cost shares for the prior fire season. They are obtaining payment from the federal government in less than one year because the Forest Services has also implemented their own electronic fire business system. It currently takes Idaho 3 to 5 years to collect fire-related payments from the federal government using paper-based transactions. The Gold's system is compatible with the Forest Service system.

Improving Transparency and Streamlining Auditing

The Gold's system will improve the transparency of fire cost reporting and data integrity. For example, IDL managers and Land Board members can log into the system with read-only permissions to review transactions. Auditing transactions will be simplified because supporting documentation, such as scanned receipts and invoices, are stored in the Gold's system. Under our current paper-based system, supporting documents are filed separately and must be retrieved manually. Reporting capabilities built into the system will help fire managers better estimate and manage costs.

IDL's Fire Transaction Statistics:

- 5,000+ transactions processed for the 2021 fire season
- 1,650+ individual vendor/contractor payment packages audited/processed in 2021
- \$5.8 million in estimated payments distributed to fire departments in 2021
- 300 interagency fire bills are issued during a typical fire season
- \$3.3 million in outstanding receivables tracked and managed across two fire seasons (2019-2020)
- \$34,456,200 five-year (2017-2021) average fire costs, with 2021 costs at \$76,600,000



IRWIN

Integrates with IRWIN, downloading incident reports for defined areas automatically while retaining user-added information.



GIS

Integrates with GIS systems, displaying fire maps and points of origin with shapefile upload functionality.



Billing Documents

Supports multiple types of billing including costs incurred by local fire departments or other agencies. It enforces Fire Rate Agreements to control amounts charged for resources.



Invoicing

Tracks incident and project costs, allowing for allocation based on ownership of the incident site. Integrates with fiscal data systems to reduce data entry and produces payment-ready invoices for submission to federal agencies.



Reports

Reports on incidents, billing and supports exporting data for additional analysis.



Single Sign On

Integrates with single sign on security management applications.



Roles

Uses roles-based security to grant individual users access to only specific areas of the system.

Attachment B: Voluminous Fire Incident Reporting Information

For every fire incident, IDL collects documents and information including:

- Incident Action Plans
- Equipment check in
- Equipment check out
- Inspections
- 209's – daily incident reports
- Claims
- Cost reports
- Shift tickets from each person each day that worked the fire
- Emergency equipment contracts
- Copies of all contracts and agreements with fire departments and districts
- Supply orders
- Documents to support supply orders
- Labor time reports from each person checking out
- And much more

The following photos illustrate the sheer volume of information collected from an incident. For the 2021 Cougar Rock Complex, which burned approximately 8,200 acres of timberland north of Orofino, Idaho, near the North Fork of the Clearwater River, IDL collected nine storage boxes of records, comprising thousands of pages of documents.

These types of documents are crucial for paying bills related to the incident, seeking reimbursement when appropriate, and pursuing legal actions where necessary. Under our current system, we store paper records. Moving forward, the Gold's Fire Business System will allow IDL to digitize new records, ensuring they are searchable, sharable and securely preserved.

