



NEWS AFFECTING STATE EMPLOYEES

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Haslam presentation to bond-rating agencies says state 'will' do outsourcing

Andy Sher, Chattanooga Times-Free press

In their Oct. 9-10 pitch to Wall Street experts reviewing the state's financial picture in advance of Tennessee issuing new bonds, the Republican governor and top state officials relied on a 63-page PowerPoint document.

A one-page section called "Looking Ahead" cites two specific initiatives "to reduce costs and improve productivity."

One is energy management. The other is "Facilities Management Outsourcing."

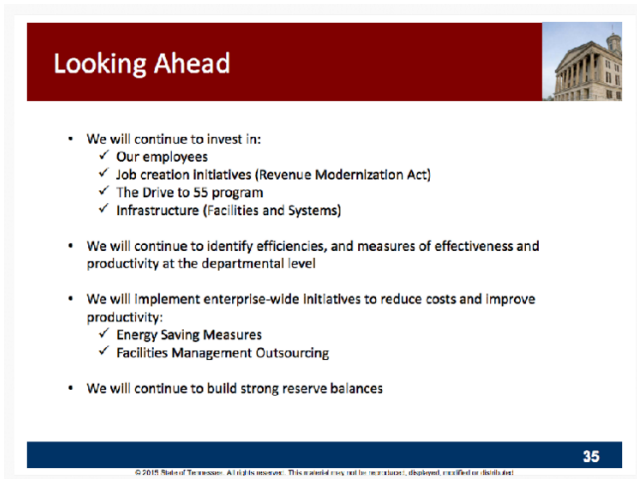
Haslam spokesman David Smith said Friday the PowerPoint's mention of outsourcing is not at odds with what Haslam told reporters Wednesday as the administration continues to walk back a confidential timetable.

First reported by Nashville's WTVF-TV last month, the timetable cited a July 1 date for outsourcing facility management and operations of most state-owned property, including colleges, state parks, prisons and more.

The governor and administration officials are adamant no decision has been made.

"I don't know how we can say that any more clearly," Haslam chided reporters last week when they asked about the controversial plan. "We've said that 10 times, that it is not decided yet."

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PPT slide presented to bond rating agencies

Gov. Haslam: Cost-cutting not an attempt to 'outsource the entire state'

Andy Sher, Chattanooga Times-Free Press

Republican Gov. Bill Haslam said Monday that critics are drawing the wrong conclusion from his administration's ongoing efforts to save money and that he's "not trying to outsource the entire state."

"It's like I said, not even close to realistic," Haslam said. "Are there things we're always going to look at that say is the state doing this now and are we the best people to be doing that? Sure, we're always going to do that. And that's something we should be doing."

Tennessee's presentation to New York bond-rating agencies on Oct. 9-10 included a one-page section titled "Running the State Like a Business."

It had a provision citing "Better managing state real estate; reducing energy costs and consumption," an apparent reference to the 2013 round of outsourcing of nearly 30 state office buildings to Chicago-based real estate giant Jones Lang LaSalle.

A second one-page section of the state's presentation was titled "Looking Ahead." Among other things, the section stated "we will implement enterprise-wide initiatives to reduce costs and improve productivity."

It then listed "facilities management outsourcing" and "energy saving measures."

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Prison food financial flap gets legislative hearing

Tom Humphrey's Humphrey on the Hill

Comptroller Justin Wilson reviewed financial problems in the prison meals program operated by the Tennessee Rehabilitative Initiative in Correction (TRICOR) before state legislators Wednesday, and TRICOR Executive Director Patti Weiland faced some critical questioning.

From The Tennessean:

Weiland and TRICOR board members acknowledge the agency had no contract with the Department of Correction for meals. That led to the department not paying an additional \$4 million anticipated by TRICOR, resulting in TRICOR essentially burning through its reserve funds accumulated over 20 years. Additionally, state auditors told lawmakers TRICOR lacks the basic financial documentation needed to conduct the type of thorough audit expected of many private companies.

Both Weiland and Department of Correction Commissioner Derrick Schofield acknowledged not having a contract was a mistake, but both said they want to continue their partnership. However, other statements and documents show it's unlikely the department and TRICOR can find common ground on costing prison meals.

TRICOR lost money because its business model was based on a price of \$3.59 per meal. The department says it would never have agreed to pay more than \$3 for those meals and there was no

written confirmation of the unit price. In the wake of the audit, though, Schofield told Weiland in a letter that the department would pay \$3.84 per meal for the rest of 2015.

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Sunday column: On controlling premature email

Tom Humphrey's Humphrey on the Hill

The state government gang has discovered there's a downside to information control when it comes to dealing with the media and email, thanks to Tennessee's open records law and reporters who did not go through designated PIOs/flacks.

Out of control, they actually saw and disclosed to the public emails that were not appropriately screened to assure promotion of institutional objectives. (WTVF-TV of Nashville put a whole pile of emails on outsourcing on its website.)

And they decided to do something about it - namely instructing bureaucrats and the hired consultants they work with to stop emailing each other and, presumably, have more private to assure that things are not "prematurely" disclosed.

When they have reached their conclusions and prepared a press release and the statement to be read at a news conference, they will let us all know in transparent fashion. And the Legislature, enlightened privately by the governor's legislative liaisons and a public slide show of properly prepared talking points, can decide the matter under appropriate circumstances.

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Push the Pump Up State Gas-Tax Lacks Political Octane

Mark Todd, TN Report

The latest Tennessee government tax collection tallies that came out last week suggest state government is, for the time being anyway, awash in unanticipated revenues.

Rep. Casada said Friday that House Republican leadership is aligned behind the idea that "we need to take the excess (general fund) revenue and put it toward the Department of Transportation to meet those immediate needs."

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Private prisons prove costly in Oklahoma

Jennifer Palmer, The Oklahoman

Oklahoma's bloated incarceration system is becoming increasingly dependent on corporate prison beds.

The annual cost of private prisons in the state has jumped nearly 30 percent in the past decade, from \$71 million in 2005 to \$92.2 million last year, records show.

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Contact

TSEA
627 Woodland Street,
Nashville, TN 37206

615.256.4533
800-251-TSEA (8732)

info@tseaonline.org

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- Brad Henry

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