sday, May 2, 2000

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City residents sue over surplus

THE BATTALION

LUBBOCK (AP) — Five residents he West Texas city of Andrews said r hometown has abused its authoriby establishing a \$20 million surplus. That much in reserve money actuly amounts to a "slush fund," acding to lawsuit they filed against the ity last week

The plaintiffs contend that the surithout voter approval. They say resints were overtaxed to build the fund, attract new industry to town. nd they want it returned.

reasonable surplus," plaintiff Wayne dollars on a \$2.2 million

"This is the first time in the history

as been sued because it manages its

oney so well that it has reserves," he

id. "This town is debt-free. It's just

It might be good management of fi-

nces, but the surplus has stripped

oters in Andrews of their voice, Find-

y said. The city, which is 35 miles

orthwest of Midland, no longer needs

ond issues that require voter ap-

20 million, that is a lot of power for e City Council, and they no longer

have to go to the voters for approval. Findley said. "We were taxed in advance, and it bypasses the rights of the voters.

Jackson said most towns would like to be in Andrews' position.

He said the reserve has allowed the city to roll back its tax rate each of the last eight years and has kept the city from us allows Andrews to spend money having to take out bonds for improvements, while at the same time working to

"To call it a slush fund really implies "The city has the right to tax and have some wrongdoing that is not there," he said. "This is not just money that sits indley said Monday. "Twenty-million there for no apparent purpose. This money is funded

and set aside

for a reason."

Property

owners in An-

drews, which

10,000 resi-

dents, pay an

ad valorem

about

per

MSC

has

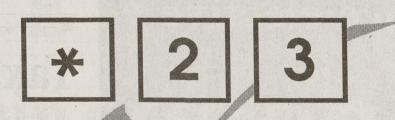
"The amount of reducudget does not seem to be tion does not equal or reasonable even come close to the amount of surplus each year."

tax rate of \$2.43 - Wayne Findley \$100 of propplaintiff erty value.

Forty cents of nd's sleeping patterns. the lawsuit is frivolous. The surplus that amount is the city's share. Residents a result of years of pinching penalso pay a 7.25- percent sales tax. One percent of the sales tax goes to the city. Findley said the city's rolling back the world that a political subdivision of taxes over the last eight years is not

> enough "They have reduced it a penny a year, which equates to \$15,000," he said. "They are reducing taxes by \$15,000 while taking a surplus of \$1.1 million. The amount of reduction does not equal or even come close to the amount of surplus each year.'

In the lawsuit, Findley and the four other plaintiffs claim the city could operate for 10 years without collecting "When the city has accumulated any taxes by utilizing the reserve.



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MALL

Gifts

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Neely Klopsteck Casey Kneupper Allison Lee Libby Long Natalie Matkin Elizabeth McNeill Kristi Miculka Marilyn Moore Lisa Pecskovsky Lynsey Potts Sharon Robinson Crissy Rohloff Jennifer Shehan Corey Short Kim Smith Lisa Smith Becky Soto Maryann Stallings Summer Storer Suzanne Tate Cacee Terry Kim Vyvial Magen Wallace Wendi Walls Erica Walvoord Christie Watt Lindsay Wehring