

NITRO TAKES STEPS TO TRIM CITY BUDGET

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Nitro city officials and City **Council** members agreed Tuesday that the city's budget should be cut by 2.5 percent.

Treasurer John Young said that city revenues have been down and could result in a deficit of \$50,000 to \$80,000 this year. The problem would be worse next year, he said.

Young noted that a couple of car dealerships in the town have gone out of business recently, and said the hotel-motel tax hasn't brought in as much as expected.

After Young's recommendations, **council** members decided that the only fair way to make changes to the budget would be to take the same amount from every department.

Mayor Rusty Casto said city departments would be notified of the budget cut today, and each department will bring its proposed cuts to a meeting Monday at 9 a.m. at City Hall.

Video lottery

Also Tuesday, **Nitro council** members tentatively approved an amendment to video lottery restrictions in a zoning ordinance passed Feb. 2.

The amendment, which could be enacted in March, would allow video lottery parlors within 1,000 feet of schools, churches or other video lottery establishments. The current restriction is 3,000 feet.

However, the 1,000-foot limit would only be in effect for two weeks. After that, the limit would be raised to 6,000 feet.

According to Councilman Dave Casebolt, the two-week grace period would enable several existing businesses to move quickly to install their video lottery machines. After that time, the higher restrictions would effectively prohibit any more video lottery machines in the city.

"We're doing everything we can to help existing business," said Casebolt. "This is a win-win-win situation for us."

Councilman Joe Savilla was against the amendment, saying that it would cause more trouble for the city in the future. He said future video lottery operators could sue the city over the restrictions.