



City of Needles, California Request for City Council Action

CITY COUNCIL NPUA

Regular Special

Meeting Date: May 26, 2026

Title: Authorize Attendance at the Discover SoCal Empire Tourism & Investment Summit

Background: Discover Inland Empire has expanded its annual tourism summit into a tri-state regional platform uniting California, Nevada, and Arizona along the historic Route 66 corridor. The newly branded **Discover SoCal Empire Tourism & Investment Summit – Route 66 International Marketplace** serves as the region's premier annual tourism conference and travel trade event, bringing together tourism organizations, travel industry professionals, media representatives, local governments, tribal organizations, airports, and state and federal agency partners.

The summit will be held July 7–9, 2026, in Ontario, California, and includes educational sessions, tourism and economic development discussions, and a Route 66-themed international marketplace designed to connect destinations and tourism suppliers with domestic and international travel buyers and media representatives.

Mayor Jernigan has been invited to participate as a guest speaker during the summit. The City has participated in previous Inland Empire tourism summits, with City Council Members attending to promote Needles' tourism assets, strengthen regional partnerships, and support economic development initiatives.

Participation provides an opportunity to showcase Needles' Historic Route 66 identity, Colorado River recreation opportunities, and ongoing economic development efforts while engaging with organizations that support tourism promotion, visitor attraction, and regional investment. The summit's focus on the Route 66 Centennial, tri-state collaboration, tourism development, and investment attraction aligns with the City Council's goals of supporting tourism, economic development, and regional partnerships.

Fiscal Impact: Travel-related expenses, including registration, lodging, meals, mileage, and other authorized incidental expenses, are estimated to be approximately \$1,000 per attendee and will be funded through the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Travel Budget.

Recommendation: Authorize Mayor Jernigan and interested City Council Members to attend the Discover SoCal Empire Tourism & Investment Summit scheduled for July 7–9, 2026, in Ontario, California, and authorize reimbursement of approved travel, lodging, meals, and related expenses in accordance with City policy.

Submitted By: Candace Clark, City Clerk

City Manager Approval: Patrick J. Martinez

Date: 5/21/2026

Other Department Approval (when required): _____

Date: _____