



City of Needles

817 Third Street, Needles, California 92363
(760) 326-2113 • FAX (760) 326-6765
www.cityofneedles.com

Mayor, Janet Jernigan
Vice Mayor Ellen Campbell
Councilmember Tona Belt
Councilmember Jamie McCorkle
Councilmember JoAnne Pogue
Councilmember Henry Longbrake
Councilmember Larry Ford

City Manager Patrick J. Martinez

MEMORANDUM

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PATRICK J. MARTINEZ, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: WEEKLY MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 22, 2026

- 1. AB 1756 Advances to State Senate:** AB 1756, authored by Assemblymember Jeff Gonzalez, was approved by the California State Assembly with bipartisan support and now advances to the California State Senate for consideration. The legislation would extend the City of Needles' Off-Highway Motor Vehicle (OHMV) Pilot Program through January 1, 2033, providing long-term certainty for the City's recreation and tourism efforts. The City of Needles thanks Assemblymember Gonzalez for his leadership and advocacy on behalf of rural communities and outdoor recreation. Staff has also contacted Senator Steve Padilla's office regarding Senate consideration of the measure. Senator Padilla previously expressed support for the City's OHMV Pilot Project, citing its ability to improve recreational access, support local tourism, reduce trespass on private property, and promote responsible economic development. Separately, staff continues coordinating the installation of approved OHMV route signage and will provide additional implementation updates as the project progresses. A ribbon-cutting ceremony to formally launch the pilot program is anticipated for **June 2026**.
- 2. ICSC Las Vegas Retail Recruitment and Business Development Outreach:** Vice Mayor Ellen Campbell, Councilmember Jamie McCorkle, Economic Development Consultant Michael Bracken, and City Manager Patrick Martinez recently attended the ICSC Las Vegas Convention, one of the nation's largest retail and commercial real estate conferences, to promote investment opportunities in Needles. Throughout the conference, the delegation met with numerous national and regional retailers, restaurant operators, hotel brands, brokers, and developers while walking approximately 27,000 steps across the convention floor to market Needles as a strategic location for future grocery, retail, hospitality, and commercial development. Discussions highlighted the City's location along Interstate 40 and Historic Route 66, more than 8 million annual vehicle trips, 5.5 million regional visitors, affordable utility rates, and access to a tri-state market approaching 148,000 residents. The City remains focused on attracting new investment, supporting local business growth, and expanding retail and service options that better serve residents, visitors, and the broader region.

3. **Opportunity Zone 2.0 Eligibility Highlighted at City-County Conference**
During the recent City-County Conference, attendees received an update on the emerging Opportunity Zone 2.0 program, a permanent federal economic development incentive authorized through the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. As part of the presentation, Needles was highlighted on preliminary eligibility mapping as a rural low-income community that may qualify for future Opportunity Zone designation under the program's updated criteria. If designated by the State of California and certified by the U.S. Department of the Treasury, Opportunity Zone status could help attract private investment for housing, commercial development, business expansion, infrastructure, and job creation projects. Staff will continue monitoring the State's nomination process and evaluate potential opportunities to position Needles for future investment.
4. **Mayor Jernigan Featured on KNTR's *Speak Out* Program:** Mayor Janet Jernigan was recently featured on KNTR Talk's *Speak Out* program hosted by Paul LaVoie, where she discussed community priorities, economic development efforts, the City's ongoing search for a grocery store, and upcoming initiatives, including the Route 66 Centennial celebration. The interview provided an opportunity to share Needles' story with listeners throughout the Tri-State region and highlight the City's continued progress and opportunities. The City appreciates Mr. LaVoie and Radio Central for providing a platform to showcase Needles and engage the broader regional community. **Residents may listen to the interview by visiting the *Speak Out* page at <https://kntrtalk.com/speak-out>.**
5. **Route 66 Centennial Caravan Stop Scheduled for June 8:** Planning continues for the Route 66 Centennial Caravan stop in Needles on **June 8, 2026, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.** at Palo Verde College. Event organizers recently released an updated promotional flyer confirming entertainment, food vendors, a vehicle caravan, and the nationally recognized **Big Texan 72 oz. Steak Challenge**, a Route 66 attraction that is expected to draw visitors and media attention to the community. Community members interested in participating in the steak challenge or volunteering to assist with event activities are encouraged to contact the City for additional information. The event supports ongoing efforts to promote tourism, celebrate the Route 66 Centennial, and showcase Needles as a premier destination along the Mother Road.
6. **Behavioral Health Community Meeting Held in Needles:** The San Bernardino County Department of Behavioral Health recently hosted a community meeting in the Needles Council Chambers regarding the transition from the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) to the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA). The meeting provided residents and stakeholders an opportunity to learn about available behavioral health programs and services, ask questions, and provide input regarding future priorities. The City appreciates the Department of Behavioral Health's continued engagement with the Needles community and its commitment to ensuring rural residents have access to information and resources related to behavioral health services.
7. **Community Events Calendar Now Live:** The City's new website now features a **[Community Events Calendar](#)**—a centralized location for community events,

civic meetings, and community programs. Local organizations are invited to submit or update events through the City Clerk's Office to keep the calendar current and inclusive. Contact **Candace Clark at cclark@cityofneedles.com** to participate. Residents can subscribe and sync the calendar to mobile devices for real-time updates, making it easier to stay informed and engaged.

- I. **Congratulations to Needles High School State Finalists:**
Congratulations to the Needles High School Lady Mustangs softball team on capturing the **2025–26 NIAA 2A State Softball Championship** and to the Needles High School Mustangs baseball team for earning **State Runner-Up honors**. Both teams represented Needles with exceptional dedication, sportsmanship, and pride throughout their championship seasons. The City extends its congratulations to the student-athletes, coaches, families, school staff, and supporters whose commitment contributed to these outstanding achievements and brought statewide recognition to the Needles community.

- II. **Memorial Day Volunteer Effort at Riverview Cemetery:** Members of the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, City staff, and community volunteers came together at Riverview Cemetery to participate in the annual Decoration Day tradition by placing American flags and white crosses at the gravesites of veterans laid to rest in Needles. The City extends its appreciation to all volunteers who helped prepare the cemetery for Memorial Day observances and honor the service and sacrifice of our nation's veterans. Residents are reminded that the annual Memorial Day Ceremony will be held at **11:00 a.m. on Monday, May 25, 2026**, at Riverview Cemetery.

- III. **Take Credit Financial Literacy Workshop Reminder:** Arrowhead Credit Union's annual "Take Credit" financial literacy workshop for youth ages 12–18 will be held at the Needles Recreation Center on **May 30 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** The free program provides hands-on financial education focused on budgeting, savings, credit, and real-world decision-making. Registration [remains open](#).

- IV. **Needles Little League Tournament of Champions Begins Next Week:** The Needles Little League Tournament of Champions (TOC) is scheduled to take place **May 26–29** at Ed Perry and Phillips Fields. The tournament is expected to bring youth baseball teams, families, and spectators from throughout the region to Needles, supporting the City's efforts to promote sports tourism, youth athletics, and local economic activity. Needles Little League is currently seeking volunteers to assist with field preparation, game operations, and snack bar activities throughout the tournament week. The City appreciates the efforts of the league's volunteers, board members, sponsors, and community partners in making the event possible.

- V. **Needles Library Summer Reading Program Returns:** The Needles Branch Library will host its annual Summer Reading Program from **June 8 through August 2**, featuring weekly educational programs, storytimes, crafts, and interactive presentations for children and families. Scheduled

activities include appearances by the Mobile Zoo of Southern California, Palo Verde College, the Bureau of Land Management, the San Bernardino County Probation and Sheriff's Departments, and other educational partners. The City encourages families to participate in this free program, which promotes literacy, learning, and youth engagement throughout the summer months. Refer to the attached flyer for more information.

1. OHMV STATE LEGISLATURE

AB 1756



ASSEMBLY PASSED



ASSEMBLY PASSED

May 21, 2026



SENATE COMMITTEE REVIEW

Next Step



SENATE FLOOR

Upcoming Step



GOVERNOR

Final Step



**EXTENDS NEEDLES OHMV PILOT PROGRAM
TO JANUARY 1, 2033**

Supporting Tourism. Strengthening Communities. Driving Economic Growth.

2. ICSC

Needles California

Shop. Play. Live - *Needles*!



2. ICSC

City of Needles, California

2026 Economic Development



\$ Millions in New Investment

Hampton Inn by Hilton



\$7 Million in New Parks

Duke Watkins, Jack Smith & New Beach Park



\$15+ Million in Infrastructure

Water Booster Rehab & Paving

Traffic Counts from Interstate 40 (Measured) (2024)

LOCATION	ANNUALIZED AVERAGE AADT
I-40 & I-95 North	8.81 MM
I-40 & Park Road	6.76 MM
I-40 & River Road	6.86 MM
I-40 & J Street	8.43 MM
I-40 & I-95 South	6.75 MM

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR PROJECT DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE, PLEASE CONTACT:

Patrick Martinez,
City Manager

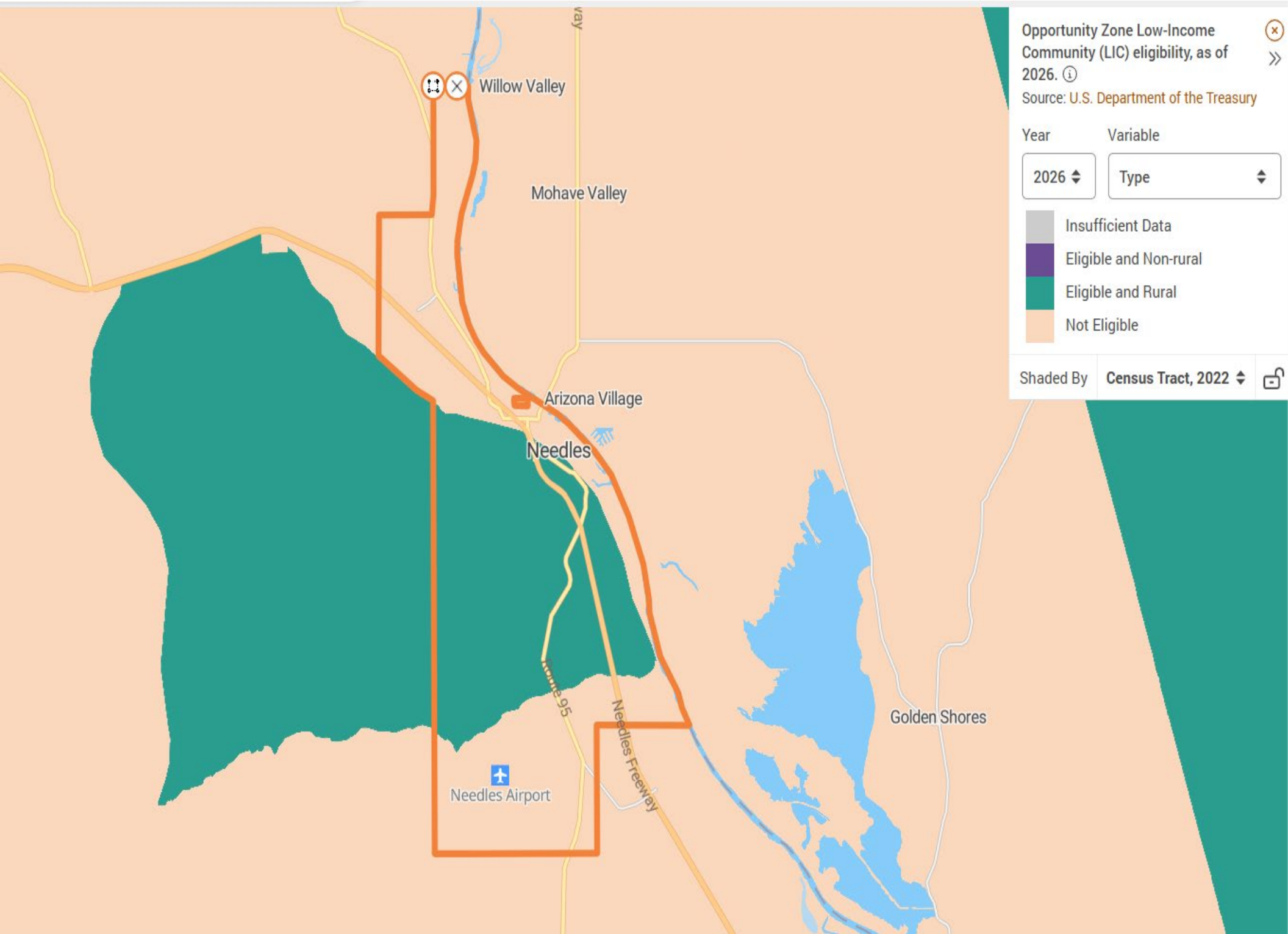
760.326.2115 x113 | pmartinez@cityofneedles.com

Michael Bracken,

Economic Development Consultant to the City of Needles
760.272.9136 | michael@dmgeconomics.com



3. OPPORTUNITY ZONES 2.0



5. ROUTE 66 CENTENNIAL CARAVAN



THE **BIG TEXAN** ★ STEAK RANCH ★

72 OZ STEAK CHALLENGE

★ THINK YOU'VE GOT WHAT IT TAKES? ★



DJ JOSE CUERVAS



FOOD TRUCK



CAR CARAVAN



MONDAY

JUNE 8TH

5:30 PM ★

PALO VERDE COLLEGE

725 W BROADWAY, NEEDLES, CA 92363



Best Western.



NEEDLES, CA



THE BIG TEXAN STEAK RANCH

★ COME HUNGRY.

★ LEAVE A LEGEND. ★

I. STATE CHAMPIONSHIP



II. MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY

MEMORIAL DAY ★ CEREMONY ★

Join us as we come together as a community to honor the brave men and women who gave their lives in service to our country.

 **Needles Riverview Cemetery, Needles, CA**



**May 25, 2026
11:00 AM**

This special program will include a heartfelt tribute to our fallen heroes, patriotic observances, and a time of remembrance.

ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO ATTEND
Let us stand together in gratitude and reflection. ★

 *We remember. We honor. We never forget.* 

III. ARROWHEAD CREDIT UNION



PLAY & LEARN

Take Credit is a financial event that guides students through real-world financial decisions.

- ▶ Cash paychecks
- ▶ Manage on-time bill payments
- ▶ Make purchase decisions
- ▶ Pay taxes from each paycheck
- ▶ Choose to live alone or with roommates
- ▶ Handle unexpected expenses, like a flat tire
- ▶ Raise their credit score
- ▶ Balance wants vs. needs

STUDENTS ARE INVITED!

Date
Saturday, May 30

Time
10am – 12pm

Location
Needles Recreation Center
1705 J St
Needles, CA 92363

Student Age
12 to 18 years old

Register by
May 25



IV. LITTLE LEAGUE TOC




★ **WE ARE EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE!** ★

NEEDLES LITTLE LEAGUE WILL BE HOSTING

★ **TOOC** ★

TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS

 **LOCATION:**
**ED PERRY &
PHILLIPS FIELDS**
NEEDLES, CALIFORNIA

 **DATES:**
MAY
26-28

 **SCHEDULE:**
TBD



**STAY TUNED FOR UPDATES, SCHEDULES,
AND MORE DETAILS ON OUR
NEEDLES LITTLE LEAGUE
FACEBOOK PAGE!**



★ **COME OUT AND SUPPORT OUR PLAYERS
AS THEY COMPETE FOR THE TITLE!** ★

V. NEEDLES LIBRARY SUMMER PROGRAM

NEEDLES BRANCH LIBRARY

1111 Bailey Ave., Needles, 92363
760-326-9255 | library.sbcounty.gov

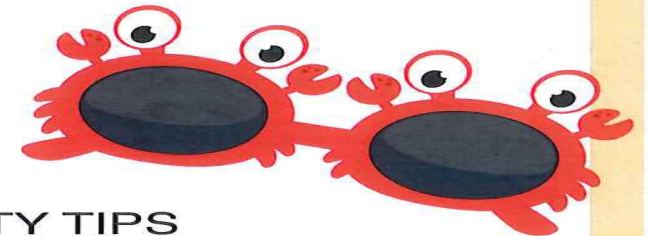
SUMMER READING PROGRAM June 8 - August 2

Wednesdays • 2:30pm
Storytime
Stories, songs, and crafts for all-ages.



PERFORMERS • Tuesdays • 1:00pm

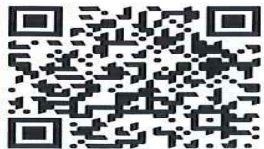
- June 9 • MOBILE ZOO OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
- June 16 • PALO VERDE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
- June 23 • CALIFORNIA JOE
- June 30 • SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY: PROBATION & SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT
- July 7 • PARTY PUPPET SHOW
- July 14 • BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
- July 21 • JOE GANDELMAN
- July 28 • CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL: SAFETY TIPS



**All County Library branches
will be closed on June 19 & July 3-4**



Library



Scan the QR Code or visit:
library.sbcounty.gov/session

MON 11am-7pm • TUE 11am-7pm
WED 11am-7pm • THURS 10am-6pm
FRI closed • SAT 9am-5pm • SUN closed