



City of Needles

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

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: February 28, 2025

1. The City of Needles continues to enhance its reputation as a premier destination for sports tourism by hosting multiple high-profile tournaments this week. These events align with the City Council's strategic goals to enhance public spaces, drive economic development, and solidify Needles as the **Gateway to California on Route 66 and the Colorado River.**

- **Colorado River Invitational Baseball & Softball Tournament**
 - **Dates:** February 27 – March 1, 2025
 - **Venues:** Needles High School Field & Nikki Bunch/Franz Flowers Ball Fields
 - **Details:** This tournament will welcome teams from across the region, bringing increased visitor activity and economic benefits to the community.
- **18th Annual Needles Spring Classic Basketball Tournament**
 - **Dates:** March 1 – 2, 2025
 - **Venue:** Needles Recreation Center
 - **Details:** Featuring 24 teams, this event provides a competitive platform for young athletes and increases visitor engagement within the city.

These tournaments are expected to generate significant tourism activity, support local businesses, and enhance community involvement, reinforcing Needles' commitment to sports and recreation. **For complete tournament schedules, refer to the attached brackets.**

2. **Tomorrow, March 1, 2025**, the City of Needles, in partnership with the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors and the San Bernardino County Fire Protection District, will host a **Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event** from **7:00 AM to 11:00 AM** at the **Needles City Yard (112 Robuffa Street, Needles, CA 92363)**. This event provides residents with a safe and responsible way to dispose of household hazardous waste, including used motor oil, batteries, paint products, medications, and electronic waste. Proper disposal helps protect our community and environment from harmful contaminants. For

more details, contact the San Bernardino County Fire Protection District's Household Hazardous Waste Program at **909-382-5401** or **1-800-OILY-CAT (1-800-645-9228)** or visit SBCfire.org/hhw. Refer to the attached flyer for full details on accepted and prohibited items.

3. **The Needles Pride Program** continues to thrive, empowering residents to take an active role in maintaining their neighborhoods, fostering community pride, and ensuring compliance with city codes. As our residents contribute to these efforts, the **City of Needles remains committed to investing in critical infrastructure improvements** that enhance service reliability and improve the overall quality of life.

This past weekend, our community came together for another **neighborhood cleanup event**, with a dozen dedicated volunteers participating. **Organized by Councilmember Zachery Longacre**, the effort focused on **J Street (around Duke Watkins Park) and the I-40 J Street On and Off Ramps** in preparation for an upcoming **sports tourism weekend** at the **Jo Jo Garcia Memorial Sports Complex and the Needles Recreation Center**. Volunteers removed over **20 bags of trash**, cleared overgrown bushes, and eliminated sidewalk debris. This collective effort is a testament to the power of **community engagement and civic pride**. See the attached image for a glimpse of the incredible work accomplished.

Meanwhile, the **City's Wastewater Department** began replacing two pumps at the **Bazoobuth Lift Station**, significantly improving system efficiency, extending its lifespan, and ensuring long-term reliability. See the attached image for a look at the new pumps. Additionally, the **Electric Department** assisted in unloading a new **chemical storage tank** that will be used at the **Duke Watkins Splash Pad**—the final component needed to complete the project and make the splash pad operational before it warms up. Our **Public Works crews** remained focused on roadway maintenance this week, making improvements along **Parkway, Balboa, Peru, and Verde Shores**, while also completing **road striping on River Road**. Their ongoing efforts are essential to ensuring our streets remain safe and functional, and we deeply appreciate their dedication to maintaining our city's infrastructure.

Recognizing the need for long-term solutions, the **City Council has allocated \$3.6 million for street improvements this fiscal year**. The second phase of these improvements began last week with the **Water Service Lateral Replacement Project**, which is currently underway on **El Monte Street, Carty Way, Carty Circle, Carty Place, Desoto Street, I Street, H Street, G Street, and Crestview Drive**. Now in the second half of its **fourth year**, the City's **comprehensive infrastructure investment initiative** continues, modernizing streets and waterlines to enhance reliability and safety. The City is also preparing to **bid on the paving portion of the project**—once underground improvements are complete, repaving will follow to improve durability and road conditions for all residents.

We encourage the community to stay engaged and report any road issues by contacting the **City of Needles Billing Office at 760-326-2115 (press #9)** or by downloading the **Needles Connect app** from the [Google Play Store](#) for Android or the [Apple Store](#) (iOS). Your input helps us build a **stronger, safer, and more vibrant Needles—together.**

4. Assemblymember Jeff Gonzalez's **Field Representatives** will host a **mobile office in Needles on Wednesday, March 19, 2025, from 10:00 AM to 5:30 PM** at the **Needles Tourism Office (920 W Broadway)**. Residents are encouraged to stop by and connect with the team, who will be available to assist with **state programs, resources, and other state-related matters**. This is a valuable opportunity for community members to voice concerns, seek guidance, and engage directly with their legislative representatives. For more details about the event, refer to the **attached flyer** and visit [Assemblymember Jeff Gonzalez's website](#) to learn more about the services provided. After meeting with Assemblymember Gonzalez's team, be sure to visit the **3rd Annual Job and Resource Fair** hosted by **San Bernardino County Supervisor Dawn Rowe** at the **El Garces Historic Train Depot (950 Front Street, Needles, CA)**, from **10:00 AM to 2:00 PM**.
5. Palo Verde College plays a vital role in the community, providing education, workforce training, and opportunities for residents to build successful careers. This past week, the college hosted a **Metropolitan Water District Apprenticeship Workshop** at the **Needles Educational Center**, where 30 attendees learned about hands-on training and career pathways in mechanical and electrical trades.

Upcoming events include the **CTE Advisory Meeting on March 26, 2025, from 12:00 PM to 5:00 PM** at **Palo Verde College Theater in Blythe, CA**. Local businesses are encouraged to participate and discuss workforce needs in fields like **Automotive, Business, Construction, Nursing, and Welding**, ensuring education aligns with regional job demands.

On **April 12, 2025**, the **Palo Verde College Foundation 5K Color Run & Walk** will occur at the **Needles Center, starting at 9:00 AM (check-in at 7:30 AM)**. The **\$25 entry fee** includes a T-shirt and meal, with proceeds benefiting **Needles Center students**. Register as a **runner, walker, or volunteer (free)** by [clicking here](#). As a cornerstone of local education and workforce development, Palo Verde College continues to provide essential programs that strengthen the community. For event details, contact **Shivam Bhakta** at shivam.bhakta@paloverde.edu or **(760) 326-5056**. Refer to the attached flyers for additional information.

6. The **City of Needles** sincerely thanks the **Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Needles office** for their **dedication and coordination** in successfully **relocating** the burros from **Rivers Edge Golf Course**. Following **final approval** from **Washington, D.C.**, the burros have been **safely relocated** to **Ridgecrest, California**, where they will be available for **adoption**. We also want to

acknowledge the efforts of our **City staff**, particularly **Animal Control** and the **staff at Rivers Edge Golf Course**, who assisted in ensuring the **safety** and **well-being** of the burros throughout the process. This **successful operation** highlights the **strong partnership** between the **City** and **BLM** in managing **local wildlife responsibly**.

7. The City of Needles is pleased to introduce **Raymond Bernasconi** as the newest **Code Enforcement Officer** within our **Development Services Department**. Mr. Bernasconi brings 36 years of law enforcement experience with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, which will be invaluable in strengthening our Code Enforcement operations. His extensive background will ensure a smooth transition and enhance the department's ability to serve our community effectively. He will be sworn in at our next City Council meeting **on March 11, 2025**. Please join me in congratulating him on his new role.
8. The **Rivers Edge Golf Course** remains the top destination for tournaments and community golf events. The **Harvest Bible Church Golf Tournament** will kick off **March 8, 2025**, featuring a **3-person scramble** with a **\$75 per player / \$225 per team** entry fee. **All proceeds benefit Harvest Bible Church**. To register, call JJ DeLeon at **(760) 326-3931**. The following weekend, the **Lucky Greens Golf Tournament**, hosted by the **Needles Area Chamber of Commerce**, occurs on **March 15, 2025**. This **3-person scramble** includes fun contests like **Closest to the Pin** and **Long Drive**, with **registration at 7:30 AM**, a **shotgun start at 8:30 AM**, and **awards at 2:00 PM**. **Sponsorships are available (Refer to attached flyer)**—contact the **Needles Chamber** at **(760) 326-2050** or click on this [link](#). Looking ahead, the **Twilight League** begins on **April 1, 2025**, featuring **12 weeks of tournament play**, and **JJ's Golf Clinic** is scheduled for **March 22, 2025, at 10:00 AM** (space is limited). For more details, to register, or to book a round, call JJ DeLeon at **(760) 326-3931** or visit www.golfneedlesca.com.
9. On Monday, **February 24, 2025**, city staff attended the **Rural Area Support Collaborative (RASC)** meeting at the Hampton Inn, engaging with key stakeholders on **health and wellness initiatives**. Participants included Dan Gomez, VP of Provider Experience; Jannette Zito, Program Manager for Health Equity; representatives from the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health; Jaclyn Randall from Palo Verde College; and City Manager Patrick Martinez. Discussions focused on expanding **provider networks**, **enhancing telehealth access**, **improving transportation solutions**, and **addressing social determinants of health**. The latest **Membership Profile Report** shows **IEHP enrollment in Needles at 1,775 members**, reflecting steady healthcare coverage. **IEHP remains a critical regional provider**, offering essential services such as **Medi-Cal enrollment assistance**, **primary and specialty care access**, **telehealth options**, and **transportation solutions to medical appointments**. To maintain coverage, **IEHP can help residents renew their Medi-Cal benefits**, and they are encouraged to do so **online, by mail, or in person**. City staff continues to advocate for **expanded healthcare resources** to ensure **Needles residents have access to necessary medical services**.

IEHP's efforts to enhance provider availability and improve access to affordable healthcare are vital to the community's well-being. IEHP's Healthcare Scholarship Fund will cover tuition costs for Needles medical students pursuing careers as Primary Care Physicians (PCPs) and specialty physicians, further strengthening the region's healthcare workforce. [Click on this link](#) for more information about scholarships. Refer to the **attached information** for further details.

10. The City is thrilled to welcome **Patrick McCaffery** as the newest member of the **Housing Commission**. The commission oversees the **Needles Housing Authority** and ensures ongoing compliance with all state and federal laws, rules, and regulations. Additionally, it reviews and recommends new grant funding opportunities for housing programs and projects, advises the **City Council** on affordable housing issues, and serves as a forum for resolving tenant concerns at existing facilities. The commission meets on the **fourth Wednesday of each month at 4 PM at El Garces**. We are excited to have Patrick join the team and look forward to his contributions. **Welcome aboard, Patrick!**
11. On behalf of the City of Needles, I extend our heartfelt congratulations to the **Needles Lady Stangs**, the **2025 NIAA 2A State Champions**, for their remarkable achievement in defending their title. Their dedication, teamwork, and perseverance exemplify the highest standards of excellence in athletics. We commend the **Mustangs**, this year's state runner-up, for an outstanding season of hard-fought competition and commendable sportsmanship. Their commitment and resilience have brought great pride to our community. A **victory parade** welcomed both teams back home to celebrate their accomplishments, recognizing their hard work and dedication. Please refer to the attached photo for a glimpse of this special celebration honoring their achievements.
12. The **City of Needles is committed to fostering a connected and engaged community** through open communication and active public participation. To enhance citizen involvement, the City launched the **"Needles Connect" mobile app**, which now boasts **over 500 users** and continues to grow. Through **Needles Connect**, residents have direct access to **real-time city news, events, and important updates**—empowering residents to stay informed and engaged. The app also provides a convenient way to **report issues such as streetlights, utility breaks, power outages, graffiti, potholes, and cannabis odors**. We encourage all residents to **download the Needles Connect app today** on the [Apple App](#) or [Google Play Store](#). Check out the **attached flyer** and scan the **QR code** to download or learn more!
13. **IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES:**
 - **Date Postponed Well No. 11 Treatment Plant Project Ribbon Cutting**
City staff are working with the state agency to finalize a new date. **We will keep the community informed as soon as a new date is scheduled.**
 - **April 4-5, 2025 – 47th Annual Colorado River Round-Up**

A full weekend of rodeo activities **Presale tickets** are available **March 31 - April 3, 2025**, at the **Rodeo Store (920 W. Broadway)**. For more details visit www.needlesrodeo.com, or contact **Judy Thornton** at **760-333-5255**.

- **April 10-12, 2025 – Art in the Park Save the date!** The **second annual Art in the Park** will showcase **art pieces from across the Tri-State region** in partnership with the **River Valley Artist Guild**. This event celebrates local creativity and community engagement. **More information to come.**
- **April 19, 2025 – Needles' 1st Annual World-Famous Chili Cookoff**
Join The River Community Coalition & Firehouse Ministries at **10:00 a.m.** in **Santa Fe Park (950 Front Street)** for a day of delicious chili, friendly competition, and community spirit. **Sponsorship, vendor, and participant opportunities are available:** [Sponsor](#), [Compete](#), [Vendor Registration](#).
- **April 21-27, 2025 – Route 66 Bike Week**
This **weeklong event** celebrates the **historic Route 66** with a **scenic ride from Needles to Seligman**, highlighting the spirit of the **open road and motorcycle culture**.
- **April 24, 2025 – Needles Animal Shelter Spay/Neuter Clinic**
The **Needles Animal Shelter** will host a **spay/neuter clinic** to promote **responsible pet ownership**. Space is **limited**, and residents must **RSVP** by completing an application and providing proof of residency. A portion of the cost is **subsidized** to make the service more accessible. For more details or to schedule an appointment, call **(760) 326-4952**.
- **May 14, 2025 – Run for the Wall (RFTW)**
This **annual tribute honoring Vietnam Veterans** will welcome over **300 motorcyclists** passing through Needles. The riders will **arrive at the historic El Garces at noon**, offering a meaningful opportunity to **honor their service**.
- **Community Calendar**
Local organizations are encouraged to coordinate with the City Clerk's Office to add or update events, keeping the calendar accurate and beneficial for the community. To submit an event or request changes, contact Candace Clark at cclark@cityofneedles.com.