



## City of Needles, California Request for City Council Action

☒ CITY COUNCIL ☐ NPUA

☒ Regular ☐ Special

**Meeting Date:** November 14, 2023

**Title:** Letter of Support for San Bernardino County Tourism Initiatives Contract FY23-28

**Background:** Discover Inland Empire is a non-profit organization that has represented the Inland Empire as a destination since 1988. The State of California has designated Discover Inland Empire as the official marketing organization dedicated to promoting the Inland Empire to visitors nationally and internationally, allowing them to bring travelers that spend more and stay longer. Lodging and food service is one of the largest job categories in San Bernardino County and was the category that had the highest growth post-pandemic.

In addition to tourism attraction, Discover Inland Empire also finances much local engagement including the Welcome Center at Ontario International Airport, promotion at San Bernardino Airport, the malls, and several signature events.

While San Bernardino County has had a cordial relationship with the member-based organization, it has not participated fiscally, which leaves the members to carry the entire burden of tourism promotion.

**Fiscal Impact:** None

**Recommendation:** Authorize the Mayor to sign a letter of support to Supervisor Dawn Rowe promoting work done by Discover Inland Empire and to encourage the County of San Bernardino to participate.

**Submitted By:** Patrick Martinez, City Manager

**City Management Review:**

*Pass for*

**Date:**

*11-1-23*

Approved: ☐

Not Approved: ☐

Tabled: ☐

Other: ☐

Agenda Item: 12



# City of Needles

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[www.cityofneedles.com](http://www.cityofneedles.com)

Mayor Janet Jernigan  
Vice Mayor Kirsten Merritt  
Councilmember Tona Belt  
Councilmember Ellen Campbell  
Councilmember Jamie McCorkle  
Councilmember JoAnne Pogue  
Councilmember Henry Longbrake  
City Manager Patrick Martinez

Supervisor Dawn Rowe  
San Bernardino County  
385 N. Arrowhead Avenue  
San Bernardino, CA 92415

RE: Support for San Bernardino County Tourism Initiatives Contract FY23-28

Dear Supervisor Rowe:

We are writing to convey our support for the tourism attraction and promotion work that Discover Inland Empire does in the region, and to encourage the County of San Bernardino to participate.

Discover Inland Empire, a non-profit organization, has demonstrated their ability to successfully represent the Inland Empire as a destination since 1988. As designated by the State of California, Discover Inland Empire is the official destination marketing organization dedicated to promoting the Inland Empire to visitors nationally and internationally, helping to create a sustainable tourism economy within the Inland Empire. As destination experts they provide leisure, meeting groups and meeting professionals with an unbiased, comprehensive resource when booking a tour, lodging, convention, meeting or event within the cities of San Bernardino County and Riverside County.

Our business relies on the work that Discover Inland Empire conducts in the area. Their domestic and international reach allows them to bring travelers that spend more and stay longer. As you know, lodging and food service is one of the largest job categories in San Bernardino County and was the category that had the highest growth post-pandemic.

Besides tourism attraction, Discover Inland Empire also finances much local engagement including the Welcome Center at Ontario International Airport, promotion at San Bernardino Airport, the malls, and several signature events.

New and exciting initiatives include focus on tribal tourism, community diversity, destination sustainability, and the Route 66 Centennial, which support the San Bernardino County Vision. Additionally, under the leadership of Freddy Bi, the President and CEO of Discover Inland Empire, we now have key international brands such as Disney, Universal Studios Hollywood, CBX, China Airlines, Hertz, Simon Malls, Expedia, and others, all creating packages directed at the Inland Empire.

Please note that Mr. Bi and his team are tourism professionals - a trade that takes decades of experience and understanding to master. Efforts implemented today take years to flourish, but (as we saw during the pandemic) such long-term returns have a high resiliency to economic cycles.

While we appreciate the County's cordial relationship with our member-based organization, your fiscal absence leaves the members to carry the entire burden of tourism promotion.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and would welcome your response.

Sincerely,

Janet Jernigan  
Mayor  
City of Needles  
[jjernigan@cityofneedles.com](mailto:jjernigan@cityofneedles.com)