



# 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 J. Martinez

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PATRICK J. MARTINEZ, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: WEEKLY MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 1, 2024

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1. Experience the thrill of sports tourism as the City of Needles hosts three dynamic tournaments this weekend, offering an electrifying spectacle for participants and spectators alike.

**1. Colorado River Baseball Invitational**

- **Teams:** Five (5)
- **Venues:** Needles High School, River Valley High School, Mohave High School
- **Date:** February 29, 2024- March 2, 2024 (refer to attached schedule)

**2. 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Needles Spring Classic Youth Basketball**

- **Teams:** Twenty-six (26)
- **Venues:** Needles High School, Needles Rec Center, and FMIT Wellness Center
- **Date:** March 2, 2024-March 3, 2024 (refer to attached schedule)

**3. Colorado River Invitational Softball Tournament**

- **Teams:** Sixteen (16)
- **Venues:** Nikki Bunch/Franz Flowers Ball Fields
- **Date:** February 29, 2024- March 2, 2024 (refer to attached schedule)

Join in celebrating the essence of sportsmanship and community spirit. The community's support undoubtedly contributes to the success of these events and add to the electric atmosphere that defines the City of Needles.

2. In July last year, City Staff presented comprehensive audit results on Needles Aquatic facilities to the City Council, outlining recommendations and estimating costs at \$5 million. Currently, City Staff is actively securing grant financing for essential long-term upgrades.

On February 13, 2024, the City Council allocated \$15,000 for immediate enhancements to improve the main pool, slide, and deck (refer to attached photos for a status update). These upgrades are scheduled for completion in preparation for the opening of the Needles Aquatics Center on June 1, 2024. Residents can enjoy lap swimming, water aerobics, swim lessons, and open swimming at the Needles Aquatics Center. The Needles Aquatics Center is located at 1101 Civic Center Dr, Needles, CA 92363. For the pool schedule and pricing, visit the City of Needles [website](#).

3. In February of last year, the City Council approved the installation of two new streetlights on the East Side of Clary Drive. We are delighted to inform you that these installations have been completed. To report any streetlight outages, kindly contact the City of Needles billing office at 760-326-2115, press #9, or use the user-friendly Needles Connect app, available for download on Android and Apple devices. Visual reference is provided in the attached image.
4. Nikki Bunch, a distinguished member of the Needles High School Class, made significant contributions to both city and school athletic programs. The community was profoundly impacted by the untimely loss of Nikki Bunch in 1974. In a celebratory and heartfelt tribute to her memory, the City, in collaboration with the community and her family, erected and dedicated the softball fields in her honor. A commemorative plaque at Nikki Bunch Field now stands as a testament to her enduring impact and our community's spirit of unity. Visual reference is provided in the attached image.
5. On February 29, 2024, City Officials and Staff enthusiastically attended the grand reopening of First Institute Training and Management Inc. The organization offers out-of-school Workforce Development programs to prepare young adults (ages 16-24) for employment. Through various skill development initiatives, the program aids young adults in overcoming barriers to education and employment by addressing individual needs and goals. First Institute Training and Management Inc. is conveniently located at 305 D Street, Needles, CA 92363. Please visit their [website](#) or refer to the attached flyer for additional details.
6. Congratulations to the Needles High School boys' and girls' basketball teams for their impressive victory in securing the NIAA 2A State Championships last Friday. The City Council will honor both teams at the March 12, 2024, meeting. A triumphant victory parade welcomed the State Champions back home after their success. Attached are photos capturing the highlights of this remarkable achievement and celebration.
7. On February 24, 2024, the Needles Chamber of Commerce flawlessly orchestrated its second annual Lucky Greens Golf Tournament, set against the stunning backdrop of the City of Needles Rivers Edge Golf Course. The event owed its success to the generous sponsorship of Tri-State Community Healthcare, Tri-State Wifi, Teamsters Local 1932, and Billet Health. A total of 14 competitive teams contended for victory, culminating in the triumph of Zarek Phillips' Team – a standout collective featuring a City of Needles employee and former NIAA State

Champ – securing the coveted top prize with an impressive aggregate score of 56.80.

For those considering hosting a golf tournament at the esteemed Rivers Edge Golf Course, please get in touch with JJ DeLeon at 760-326-3931. To catch a glimpse of the triumph and camaraderie that characterized this successful event, we invite you to explore the attached photo.

8. The California City Managers Foundation (CCMF) humbly works to nurture excellence in city management across California's 480+ incorporated cities and towns. Dedicated to its mission, CCMF actively assists current city managers by offering education, training, and a platform to celebrate their accomplishments and the broader profession. Through its Profiles in Management series, the organization shares the experiences and insights of city managers from diverse corners of the state.

In the most recent edition of the series, the City of Needles City Manager had the privilege of being interviewed. For those interested in exploring this spotlight, follow this [link](#) or refer to the attached document.

# 1. COMMUNITY TOURNAMENTS

## Colorado River Baseball Invitational Feb. 29<sup>th</sup>, March 1, 2 2024



ALL GAMES CA TIME	Field 1 – Needles High School		Field 2 – River Valley High School		Field 3 – Mohave High School
<b>Thursday 2-29-24</b>				Wed 2-28-24 <b>6:00 PM</b>	HOLTVILLE vs MOHAVE
<b>8:00 AM</b>	HOLTVILLE vs NEEDLES				
<b>10:30 AM</b>	HOLTVILLE vs SPRING CREEK	<b>10:30 AM</b>	KINGMAN ACADAMY vs PAHRUMP	<b>10:00 AM</b>	MOHAVE vs CENTRAL
<b>1:00 PM</b>	PAHRUMP vs SOUTHWEST	<b>1:00 PM</b>	RIVER VALLEY vs CENTRAL	<b>12:30 PM</b>	WENDOVER vs WILLIAMS
<b>3:30 PM</b>	NEEDLES vs SOUTHWEST	<b>3:30 PM</b>	SPRING CREEK vs KINGMAN ACADAMY	<b>3:00 PM</b>	WILLIAMS vs LOWRY
		<b>6:00PM</b>	WENDOVER vs RIVER VALLEY	<b>5:30 PM</b>	LOWRY vs MOHAVE
<b>Friday 3-1-24</b>					
<b>8:00 AM</b>	River Valley (JV) vs Needles (JV)				
<b>10:30 AM</b>	HOLTVILLE vs WILLIAMS	<b>10:00 AM</b>	SOUTHWEST vs KIGMAN ACADAMY	<b>10:30 AM</b>	LOWRY vs WENDOVER
<b>1:00 PM</b>	NEEDLES vs HOLTVILLE	<b>1:00 PM</b>	CENTRAL vs SPRING CREEK	<b>1:00 PM</b>	KINGMAN ACADAMY vs WENDOVER
<b>3:30 PM</b>	SPRING CREEK vs WILLIAMS	<b>3:30 PM</b>	LOWRY vs RIVER VALLEY	<b>3:30 PM</b>	SOUTHWEST vs PAHRUMP
		<b>6:15 PM</b>	PAHRUMP vs RIVER VALLEY	<b>6:00 PM</b>	CENTRAL vs MOHAVE
<b>Saturday 3-2-24</b>					
<b>8:00 AM</b>	LOWRY vs NEEDLES	<b>8:00 AM</b>	PAHRUMP vs CENTRAL	<b>8:00 AM</b>	MOHAVE vs SPRING CREEK
<b>10:30 AM</b>	CENTRAL vs NEEDLES	<b>10:30 AM</b>	SOUTHWEST vs RIVER VALLEY	<b>10:30 AM</b>	KINGMAN ACADAMY vs WILLIAMS

# Colorado River Invitational Softball Tournament 2024

		Bracket Play 6 Innings		Championship 7 Innings	
POOL A		POOL B		POOL C	POOL D
Faith Lutheran		Aquinas		Coachella	Boulder City
Palo Verde Blythe		Doral		Legacy	Cimmaron Memorial
Tolleson		Fernley		Lowry	Holbrook
Williams		Sierra Vista		Needles	Yuma Catholic
Friday 1st Round					
	B#1				
	NB 1:30 PM G1				
Sat 11:00AM NB G13	G#4	Sat 9:30AM NB Game 9			
	R#2				
	NB 6:00 PM G7				
	Y#3				
			2:00PM NB Game 17		
	Y#2				
	FF 6:00 PM G8				
Sat 11:00AM FF G14	R#3	Sat 9:30AM FF Game 10			
	G#1				
	FF 1:30PM G2				
	B#4				
				Sat 4:00PM NB Game 19	
	R#1				Championship
	NB 4:30PM G5				
Sat 12:30PM NB G15	Y#4	Sat 8:00AM NB Game 11			
	B#2				
	NB 3:00PM G3				
	G#3				
			2:00PM FF Game 18		
	G#2				
	FF 3:00PM G4				
Sat 12:30PM FF G16	B#3	Sat 8:00AM FF Game 12			
	Y#1				
	FF 4:30PM G6				
	R#4				
<p>Top Team Denotes Home Team - Home Team Is In 3rd Base Dugout.</p> <p>ALL TIMES Are California Time Home Teams will keep official book.</p> <p>Run Rules &amp; Time will be in affect for Pool Play &amp; Bracket Play.</p> <p>Bracket Play Run Rule - 10 after 4 - 8 after 5 Bracket Play time limit 80 Min.</p> <p>Even Seeds will flip a coin to determine home team.</p> <p>International Tie Breaker will be used for games that end in a tie. <b>NO TIES.</b></p> <p>If a CA team runs out of games, their opponent will move on no matter the outcome of the game.</p>					

2024 Needles Spring Classic  
Tournament Gym Schedule

**SATURDAY**

Needles Recreation Center		Needles High School		Wellness Center	
8:00 AM	3/4 B #2	8:00 AM	7/8 B #1	8:00 AM	3/4 B #1
9:00 AM	5/6 B #1	9:00 AM	7/8 G #1	9:00 AM	3/4 G #1
10:00 AM	5/6 G #2	10:00 AM	7/8 B #2	10:00 AM	5/6 G #1
11:00 AM		11:00 AM	7/8 B #3	11:00 AM	5/6 B #2
12:00 PM	3/4 G #2	12:00 PM	7/8 G #2	12:00 PM	3/4 B #3
1:00 PM		1:00 PM	7/8 B #4	1:00 PM	5/6 G #3
2:00 PM	5/6 B #3	2:00 PM	7/8 B #5	2:00 PM	3/4 B #5
3:00 PM	3/4 B #4	3:00 PM	7/8 G #3		
4:00 PM	3/4 G #3	4:00 PM	7/8 B #6		
5:00 PM	5/6 B #4	5:00 PM	7/8 B #7		
6:00 PM	5/6 G #4	6:00 PM	7/8 B #8		
7:00 PM	3/4 G #4	7:00 PM	7/8 B #9		
8:00 PM	3/4 B #6	8:00 PM	7/8 G #4		
9:00 PM	5/6 B #5	9:00 PM	7/8 B #10		

**SUNDAY**

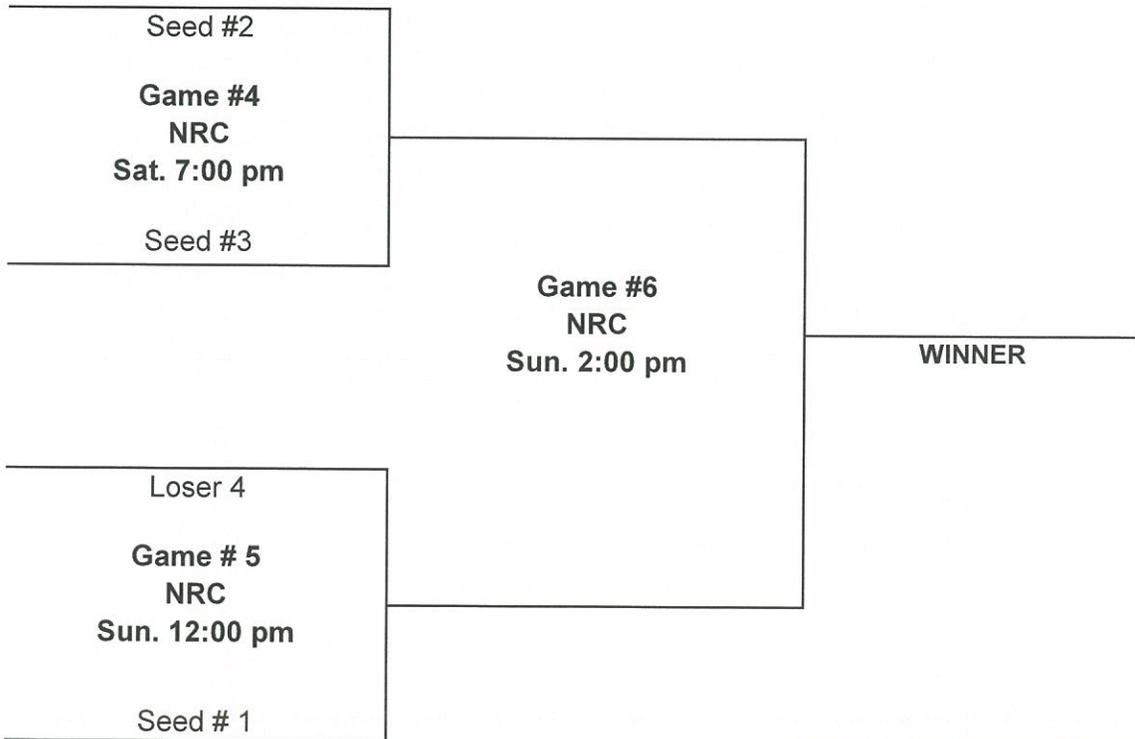
Needles Recreation Center		Needles High School	
8:00 AM	3/4 B #8	8:00 AM	7/8 B #11
9:00 AM	5/6 G #5	9:00 AM	7/8 B #12
10:00 AM	5/6 G #6	10:00 AM	7/8 G #5
11:00 AM	5/6 B #6	11:00 AM	7/8 B #13
12:00 PM	3/4 G #5	12:00 PM	5/6 G #7 (Championship)
1:00 PM	3/4 B #7	1:00 PM	5/6 B #7 (Championship)
2:00 PM	3/4 G #6 (Championship)	2:00 PM	7/8 G #6 (Championship)
3:00 PM	3/4 B #9 (Championship)	3:00 PM	7/8 B #14 (Championship)

**NEEDLES SPRING CLASSIC  
YOUTH BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT  
MARCH 2 ~ 3, 2024**

**3rd & 4th GRADE GIRLS**

**Team #1**    **Beaumont**  
**Team #2**    **29 Palms**  
**Team #3**    **Needles**

Day & Time	Teams	Site
<b>Game #1</b> <b>Sat. 9:00 am</b>	<b>1 VS 2</b>	<b>WC</b>
<b>Game #2</b> <b>Sat. 12:00 pm</b>	<b>2 VS 3</b>	<b>NRC</b>
<b>Game #3</b> <b>Sat. 4:00 pm</b>	<b>3 VS 1</b>	<b>NRC</b>



**NRC - Needles Rec. Center**  
**WC - Wellness Center**

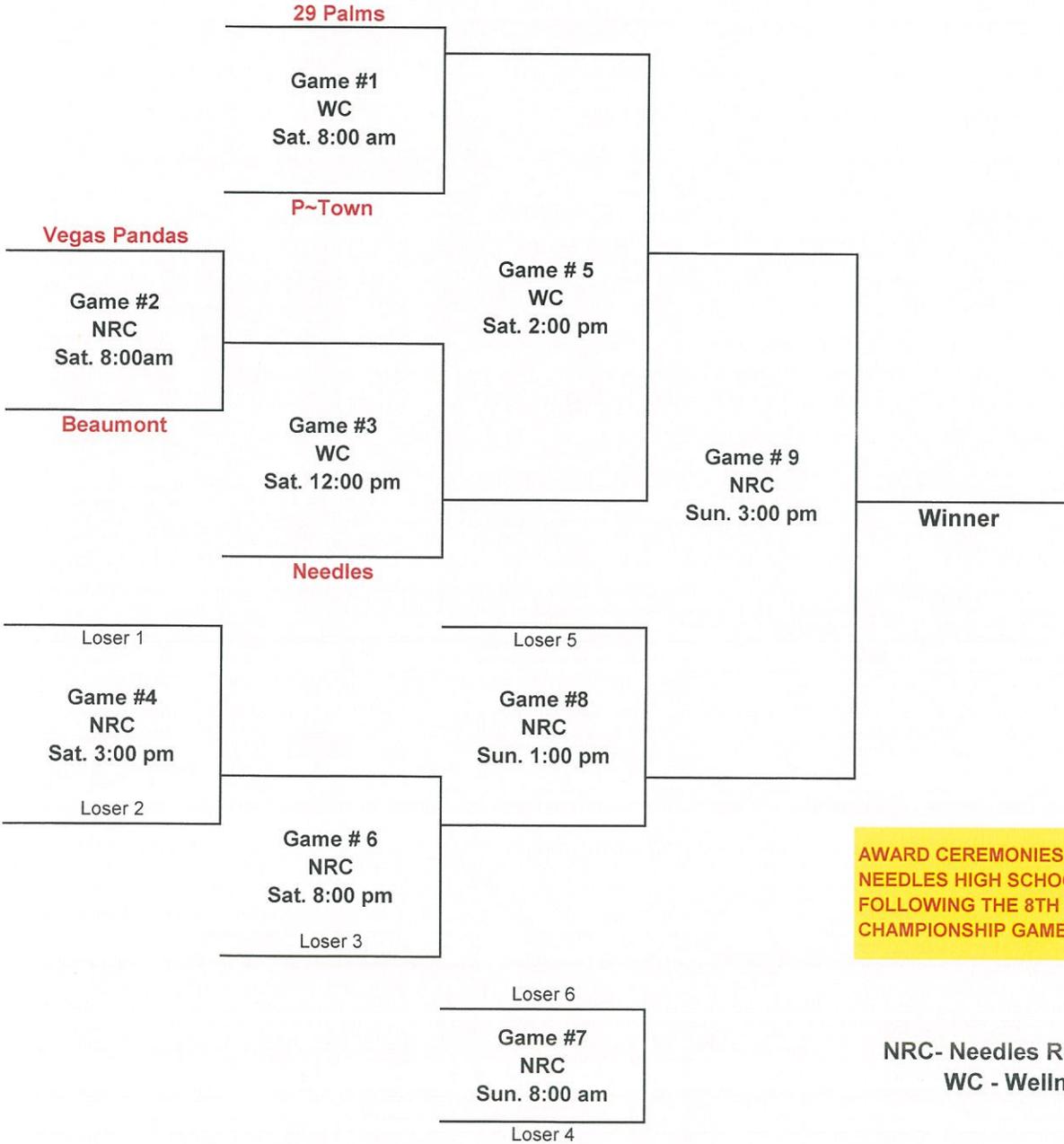
**AWARD CEREMONIES WILL BE  
 @ 3:45pm AT NEEDLES HIGH  
 SCHOOL IMMEDIATELY  
 FOLLOWING THE 8TH GRADE  
 BOYS CHAMPIONSHIP GAME  
 ON SUNDAY**

**ALL TIMES LISTED ARE CALIFORNIA**

NEEDLES SPRING CLASSIC  
YOUTH BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT  
MARCH 2 ~ 3, 2024

**3rd ~ 4th GRADE BOYS**

- |         |               |
|---------|---------------|
| Team #1 | 29 Palms      |
| Team #2 | Vegas Pandas  |
| Team #3 | Needles       |
| Team #4 | Beaumont      |
| Team #5 | P~Town Parker |



AWARD CEREMONIES WILL BE @ 3:45PM AT NEEDLES HIGH SCHOOL IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE 8TH GRADE BOYS CHAMPIONSHIP GAME ON SUNDAY.

NRC- Needles Recreation Center  
WC - Wellness Center

**ALL TIMES LISTED ARE CALIFORNIA**

# NEEDLES SPRING CLASSIC YOUTH BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

March 2 ~ 3, 2024

## 5th & 6th GRADE GIRLS

Team #1	29 Palms
Team #2	Needles
Team #3	Vegas Pandas
Team #4	Beaumont



AWARD CEREMONIES WILL BE @ 3:45PM AT  
NEEDLES HIGH SCHOOL IMMEDIATELY  
FOLLOWING THE 8TH GRADE BOYS  
CHAMPIONSHIP GAME ON SUNDAY

NRC - Needles Recreation Center  
WC - Wellness Center  
NHS - Needles High School

**ALL TIMES LISTED ARE CALIFORNIA**

# NEEDLES SPRING CLASSIC YOUTH BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

March 2 ~ 3, 2024

## 5th ~ 6th GRADE BOYS

Team #1	Needles
Team #2	29 Palms
Team #3	Vegas Pandas
Team #4	Beaumont



AWARD CEREMONIES WILL BE @ 3:45PM AT  
NEEDLES HIGH SCHOOL IMMEDIATELY  
FOLLOWING THE 8TH GRADE BOYS  
CHAMPIONSHIP GAME ON SUNDAY

NRC - Needles Recreation Center  
WC - Wellness Center  
NHS - Needles High School

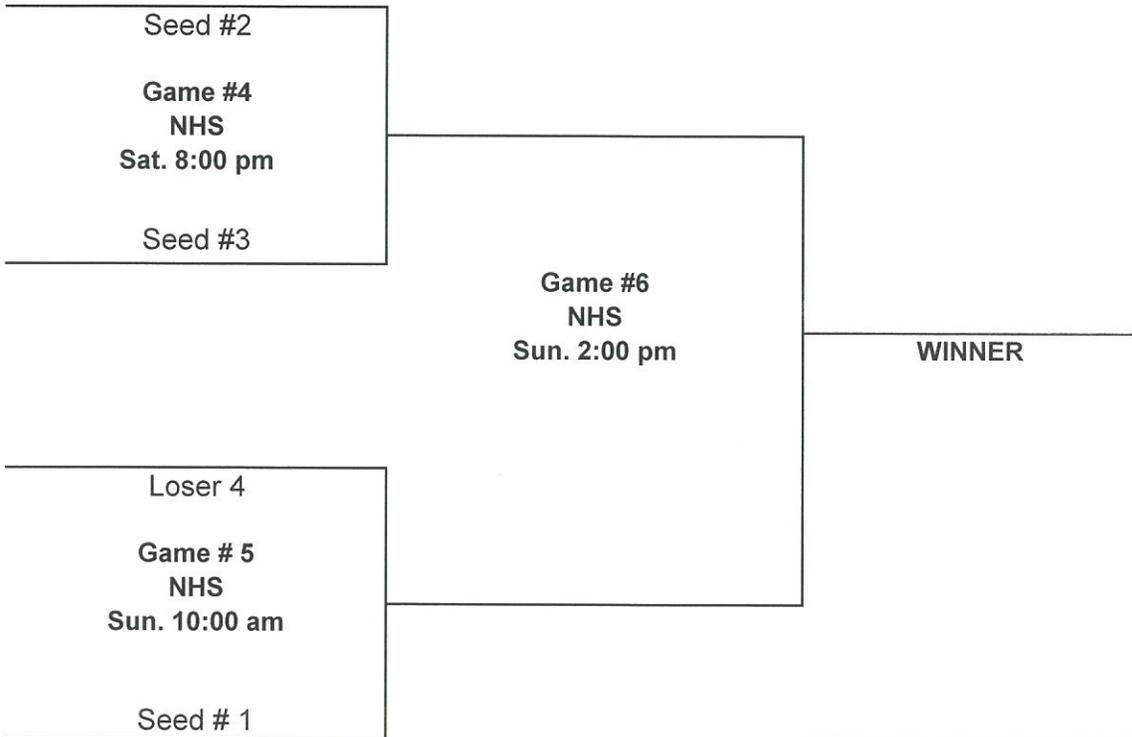
ALL TIMES LISTED ARE CALIFORNIA

**NEEDLES SPRING CLASSIC  
YOUTH BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT  
MARCH 2 ~ 3, 2024**

**7th ~ 8th GRADE GIRLS**

Team #1    **Beaumont**  
Team #2    **29 Palms**  
Team #3    **Needles**

Day & Time	Teams	Site
Game #1    Sat. 9:00 am	1 VS 2	NHS
Game #2    Sat. 12:00 pm	2 VS 3	NHS
Game #3    Sat. 3:00 pm	3 VS 1	NHS



NHS - Needles High School

**AWARD CEREMONIES WILL BE  
@ 3:45pm AT NEEDLES HIGH  
SCHOOL IMMEDIATELY  
FOLLOWING THE 8TH GRADE  
BOYS CHAMPIONSHIP GAME  
ON SUNDAY**

**ALL TIMES LISTED ARE CALIFORNIA**

**NEEDLES SPRING CLASSIC BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT  
MARCH 2 ~ 3, 2024**

**7 ~ 8th GRADE BOYS**

Team #1 29 Palms	Team #2 Needles
Team #3 Beaumont	Team #4 Ty's Warriors
Team #5 29 Palms Falcons	Team #6 Hualapai Rec.
Team #7 Needles White	



**ALL TIMES LISTED ARE CALIFORNIA**

## 2. AQUATIC CENTER PROJECT STATUS



## 2. AQUATIC CENTER PROJECT STATUS



## **2. AQUATIC CENTER PROJECT STATUS**



### 3. CLARY STREETLIGHT INSTALLATION



## 4. NIKKI BUNCH COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE



## 5. FIRST INSTITUTE GRAND REOPENING

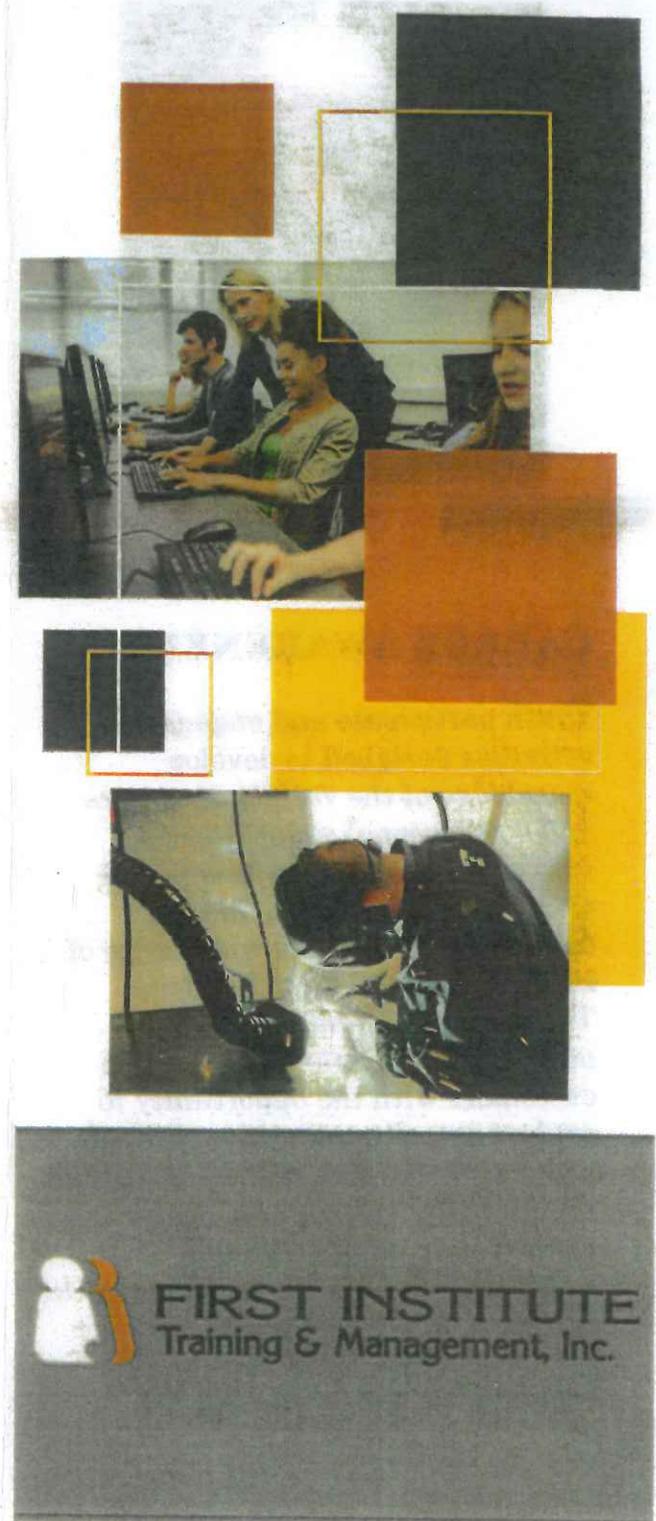


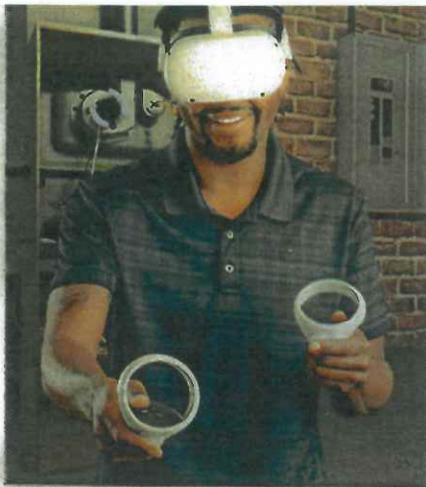
## ABOUT FITM

First Institute Training & Management, Inc., has been providing Out-of-School Workforce Development programs since 2005. Our programs prepare them for employment through various programs that develop their skills. The program assists young adults in overcoming barriers to education and employment by targeting the individual needs and goals of each participant. Participants are prepared to enter many growing, in-demand careers including Medical Office Assistant, Welding Technology, and Business Computer Applications.

## SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Outreach/Recruitment
- Community Collaboration
- Federal/State and Local subsidies for occupational skills training
- Industry Recognized Credential Programs
- Career Pathways/Planning Development
- Paid Work Experience
- Case Management
- Life Skills Development
- Follow-up Services





## CAREER AWARENESS

Youth participate and engage in activities designed to develop knowledge of the variety of careers and occupational opportunities available, working conditions and training prerequisites, and job opportunities across a wide range of industry sectors. First Institute Training and Management has partnered with Transfr to provide customers with the opportunity to explore career possibilities through new age technology known as virtual reality (VR). Transfr empowers youth/young adults through comprehensive career development to navigate new career paths, enhance job satisfaction, and adapt to the evolving workforce through VR.

## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Customers participate in leadership development opportunities which encouraged leadership development, responsibility, confidence, employability, self-determination, and other positive social behaviors. Customers are also given exposure to post-secondary educational routes. Youth complete training in decision-making, including determining priorities and problem-solving. Discussions about bringing your "A" game to work are focused on work performance, attire, attitude and expectations on the job.



**“Eventhough it may get dark at times, you will always find something that will bring light to your life. FITM is my light.”**

**-La-Tiarra Haar**

*Current Customer*

## FINANCIAL LITERACY

First Institute Training and Management has partnered with Chase Bank to share their creation of a six-week Financial Literacy Course equipping students with the essential tools to manage their finances. The financial literacy course focuses on financial issues that students will encounter in their everyday lives such as comprehension of budgeting, investing, credit and debt, planning for savings and retirement, understanding taxes and insurance, and navigating financial institutions and systems.

## 5. FIRST INSTITUTE GRAND REOPENING



## 6. NHS STATE CHAMPIONS



## 6. NHS STATE CHAMPIONS



## 7. NEEDLES CHAMBER GOLF TOURNAMENT



# 8. CCMF PROFILES IN MANAGEMENT



HOME

SUPPORTING EXCELLENCE

NEWS & EVENTS

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MY ACCOUNT

## What inspired you to enter city management?

From a young age, my interest in city management was sparked. The influence of my parents, who were dedicated public servants and educators, played a pivotal role in inspiring my journey into city management. Growing up in an environment where public service and civic engagement were highly valued instilled in me a profound sense of responsibility and a genuine desire to contribute to the well-being of my community. Having parents who were educators provided a firsthand view of the importance of public service and exposed me to the significance of active community involvement. Witnessing their work's impactful role in shaping others' lives became a powerful motivation for me to pursue a similar path—one where I could make a positive difference through the avenues of local government and city management. I have a servant leadership style that prioritizes the well-being and

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development of my team members by focusing on their needs. I see myself as a coach who helps encourage and support my employees, and that helped contribute to my choosing to be a city manager because I have the opportunity to build a team to achieve the common goals of the community.

### ***How did you become a city manager?***

Embarking on the journey to become a city manager, my career in local government has evolved through a robust background in policy, planning, and real estate development. This multidimensional foundation has played a crucial role in effectively addressing every community's diverse development and economic needs.

My professional journey began as a development director for the city of Needles in 2017, a pivotal role that immersed me in the intricacies of policy formulation, urban planning and the dynamic world of real estate development. Recognizing the essential role these elements play in fostering community growth, I deeply understood the interconnectedness between physical layout, economic aspirations and the enhancement of city services.

Subsequently, I was promoted to assistant city manager, where I oversaw the development services department and assumed additional responsibilities as required by the city manager. This progression was facilitated by the guidance and mentorship of my predecessor, who took me under his wing, supporting my professional growth and positioning me as the leading candidate for the position upon his retirement. I assumed the role in October of 2023, after my predecessor was in the role for ten years. I didn't just want to be a city manager for any

city; I wanted to be the city manager for the community where I raised my children.

In addition to my hands-on experience, my educational journey has fortified my role as a city manager. Having pursued formal education at the University of Southern California, I earned a Bachelor of Science in public policy and real estate development, a master's degree in urban planning, and a master's certificate in real estate development. Complementing these academic credentials, I completed certification programs at California State University, Fresno, through the California Association for Local Economic Development. Furthermore, I am recognized as an Accredited California Economic Developer. Additional qualifications include a master's Certificate from ICMA for their High-Performance Leadership Course and completion of the Stanford Local Summer Institute Class of 2023. These credentials collectively empower me with theoretical knowledge and practical insights, enabling me to adeptly navigate and address the multifaceted challenges inherent in city management.

### ***What do you enjoy most about being a city manager?***

Nestled on the eastern edge of the Mohave Desert, where California converges with Arizona and Nevada, lies the city of Needles—a small, remote, and rural community often dubbed the East Coast of California. Serving as the gateway to California along the I-40 from Arizona, our city holds a distinctive position with its unique geography and landscape.

Despite facing challenges in our economically disadvantaged community, I consider myself fortunate to be an integral part of this special place. In my role as city manager, I find immense satisfaction in actively

contributing to the economic growth of the city of Needles. This position provides me with a valuable platform to attract businesses, foster job creation and drive economic development, ultimately enhancing the prosperity of our community. Daily, I encounter complex challenges, and I thoroughly enjoy problem-solving; the roles provide ample opportunities to address infrastructure, public services and community development issues.

Every day, I dedicate myself to the noble cause of improving the quality of life for our residents. It's a privilege to work towards creating a more vibrant and thriving environment, and I take pride in the positive impact we can collectively make on the lives of those who call the city of Needles home.

***What role does a city manager play in local government, and how do you feel it differs from that of a Council Member or Mayor?***

In the intricate framework of local government, the city manager assumes a pivotal role often likened to being the mechanic, as my predecessor aptly put it. While the City Council establishes the overarching goals for the city, it becomes the city manager's responsibility to adeptly lead a team and cultivate a collaborative work environment to bring these objectives to fruition.

My role as a conductor is orchestrating the efforts of a dedicated team to align with the vision set by the City Council. Working collectively towards the common goals outlined by the Council is a professional obligation and a personally rewarding endeavor. The ultimate aim is to enhance the quality of life for residents and contribute significantly to the city's overall well-being.

In contrast to the roles of Council Members and Mayors, who are instrumental in goal-setting and policy formulation, a city manager is focused on translating these objectives into actionable plans. The emphasis lies in execution, ensuring that the strategies devised collectively contribute tangibly to the community's advancement. It is both a privilege and a responsibility to guide this process, ensuring that the city's goals align seamlessly with the needs and aspirations of its residents.

### ***What does a typical day look like?***

During a typical day, a significant part of my role involves ensuring that the City Council is well-informed about pertinent events unfolding within our community. This is particularly crucial when anticipating community inquiries. I proactively engage with my department heads, fostering open discussions about ongoing projects and collaboratively addressing any challenges they may encounter.

A key aspect of my day is also dedicated to addressing unforeseen issues that "walk in through the door." I've come to appreciate that it's not merely the meetings we plan for but, more significantly, the impromptu discussions and concerns that unexpectedly arise. These unplanned interactions often require immediate attention and a thoughtful, responsive approach.

My daily routine revolves around maintaining a constant flow of communication with the City Council, collaborating with department heads to navigate ongoing projects and being readily available to address the unanticipated matters that inevitably emerge. This adaptive and hands-on approach ensures that I am attuned to the pulse of our city, enabling me to effectively lead and respond to the evolving needs of our community.

***What city project are you most proud of?***

In October 2023, I assumed the role of the city manager. It only took three months before I worked with my council to declare a citywide emergency. On January 23, 2024, city staff faced a significant challenge when the city's only pharmacy announced its closure. This posed a severe concern for the 3,000 Medi-Cal patients (2,300 IEHP Patients) who relied on Rite-Aid for their pharmaceutical needs over the past two years. To provide context, Needles has a population of 5,200, with 33% of the residents over 55 and over half receiving government subsidies. The City Council took decisive action on January 30, 2024, by formally adopting Resolution No. 2024-7, declaring a Local Emergency in response to the pharmacy closure. This resolution empowers the city manager to proactively seek essential goods, services and mutual aid from neighboring local agencies, the county of San Bernardino and the state of California. The strategic initiative is designed to ensure the swift acquisition of abundant resources to address the immediate emergency, facilitating the procurement of aid and services. This ensures that residents of Needles maintain uninterrupted access to critical medications and essential goods and services. Through a collaborative effort and a cross-agency initiative, city staff successfully worked with the private sector to establish five pharmacies in Arizona that are now accepting Medi-Cal patients, with one that will deliver to Needles. This proactive approach has enabled us to address the needs of our residents swiftly and effectively. I also utilized our Needles Area Transit Service to have a bus go into Arizona twice a week to provide residents who do not have transportation access to their pharmaceutical needs.

***What are the greatest challenges facing city managers in the state today?***

- Homelessness
- Housing Affordability and Availability
- CBRT Ballot Measure (California Business Roundtable)
- Budgetary Constraints
- Infrastructure Maintenance and Upgrades

***When and how do you interact with the residents of your city?***

Every day, I engage with the residents of my community, whether it's at a Chamber breakfast or a local high school basketball game. Living within my community offers a unique perspective, allowing me to comprehend the real-life impacts of city council decisions fully. Beyond my role, personal connections also contribute to this understanding — my wife is an elementary school teacher, my mother recently retired as the superintendent of Needles Unified School District and my stepfather serves on The Palo Verde Community College Board of Trustees.

In our vibrant small town, brimming with activities, each day provides ample opportunities for interaction. We've established a community calendar, ensuring that all active organizations have a chance to celebrate and connect. Whether it's housing elements, general plan updates or public engagement for grant opportunities, we consistently bring the community together to actively participate in the decision-making process.

***What is the role of a city manager in upholding the public's trust in local government?***

Maintaining a transparent civic environment hinges on the crucial role of a city manager in building and preserving the public's trust. I often emphasize that clear communication is the linchpin to establishing and nurturing this trust. Upon assuming the city manager role, I prioritized weekly updates to keep the public well-informed about city events. Whether detailing park construction progress, addressing ongoing emergencies or providing storm preparation tips, the goal was to offer clear and accessible information through a weekly city managers memo. This proactive approach not only holds the city manager and staff accountable but also showcases our active engagement with the community.

During recent emergencies, open and transparent communication became paramount. I recognized the importance of accuracy and clarity in our messages, ensuring that the public received timely information during challenging times. This commitment to transparency fostered trust and underscored our dedication to keeping the community well-informed and resilient in the face of adversity.

***How has being awarded the Executive Education Grant helped better your skills in the city management profession?***

As I progress in my city manager career, I reflect on the pivotal role the Executive Education Grant played that enabled my participation in the 2023 Local Governance Summer Institute at Stanford University. This experience has not only propelled me to the next level but was made possible through the valuable support of the CCMF Scholarship. Operating within a constrained budget, the city of Needles encounters distinctive financial challenges, defined by its economically resilient spirit. The

financial support from CCMF has opened doors that would have otherwise been inaccessible, providing crucial opportunities for our city. Participating in the LGSI has connected me with a network of seasoned city managers and exposed me to innovative problem-solving approaches, leadership skills and strategic thinking essential for navigating the evolving landscape of technological and environmental changes. The experience further provided personal and professional development opportunities through mentorship and coaching.

In a short span, CCMF has enriched my knowledge and connected me with a community of professionals with whom I share a lasting bond. I am deeply grateful for the support that has significantly shaped my career, and I look forward to continued growth and collaboration.

Additional Links:

- <https://www.ca-ilg.org/case-story/big-strides-small-city>
- <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/about-hcd/newsroom/hcd-technical-assistance-helps-city-of-needles-adopt-housing-elements>

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February 23rd, 2024

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NEWS

CCMF Executive Education Grant  
Program Complete for 2023-24  
Program Year  
February 29, 2024