City of Needles
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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: January 2, 2026

1. **Route 66 Centennial – Celebrating a Century on the Mother Road**
   2026 marks the 100th anniversary of historic Route 66, and the City of Needles is actively positioning itself as a must-stop destination at the gateway to California. As part of the Centennial kickoff, the City placed a Route 66 Centennial advertisement in *Memories from the Mother Road: Celebrating a Century of Route 66*, directing travelers to the Needles Visitor Center and highlighting Needles as an original Route 66 town. This targeted outreach is intentionally designed to drive Centennial-year travel into the community and convert pass-through traffic into local visitation. To guide and coordinate these efforts, the City Council has established a Route 66 Centennial Committee consisting of Mayor Jernigan, Vice Mayor Campbell, and Councilmember McCorkle. Local programming is advancing, including the Route 66 Info Fair on **February 14, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m**. at El Garces, hosted by Friends of El Garces, and Route 66-themed elements incorporated into Art in the Park scheduled for **March 26–28**. Both events will include Route 66–themed classic car shows on Saturday, extending Centennial visibility through community programming while supporting tourism, economic activity, and long-term community pride.

2. **Route 66 Statewide & National Exposure – Tournament of Roses**
   The City of Needles received significant statewide and national exposure through its inclusion in the *Road to the Rose Parade* video series, commissioned by the Tournament of Roses. The City was featured as part of the San Bernardino County Route 66 segment, which highlights iconic communities along the Mother Road in the lead-up to the Rose Parade. Sponsored by Visit California and Discover Inland Empire, the segment features Mayor Janet Jernigan and reinforces Needles' role as California's eastern

gateway to Route 66. The video also showcases Fender's Motel, underscoring the importance of historic lodging and authentic Route 66 experiences. Filming occurred in early December, with distribution through Tournament of Roses and Discover Inland Empire digital and social media channels. This exposure complements the City's ongoing Route 66 Centennial advertising, events, and broader tourism strategy already underway. Click on this link to watch the video.

3. **Railcam Installation and Tourism Visibility**
   This week, City crews installed a new PTZ rail camera generously donated by SouthWest RailCams, further expanding real-time visibility of Needles to a national and international audience. Needles continues to attract strong viewership due to its historic rail corridor and rich local history, with increasing interest from viewers seeking to learn more about the community. The PTZ camera is hosted by the City of Needles and is publicly accessible through SouthWest RailCams' live platform. **As of November 2025**, the Needles East Camera recorded 33,513 views and 5,129 watch hours, while the Needles West Camera recorded 10,018 views and 1,376 watch hours, demonstrating sustained engagement. The installation supports City Council goals related to tourism promotion, historic awareness, and leveraging digital platforms to increase exposure and interest in Needles as a destination.

4. **Assemblymember Gonzalez Mobile Office Hours**
   Assemblymember Jeff Gonzalez will host Mobile Office Hours at El Garces on **Thursday, January 15**, from **12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.**, providing residents with convenient, local access to state legislative assistance and resources without the need to leave the community. This outreach allows constituents to meet directly with the Assemblymember's office to receive support on state-related matters and services. The City of Needles appreciates Assemblymember Gonzalez's continued engagement and responsiveness to the needs of rural communities. The City extends its gratitude to Assemblymember Gonzalez and his staff for their ongoing support and commitment to serving the residents of Needles.

5. **Needles Pride Program – Lillyhill Roadway Repairs**
   This week, Public Works crews completed roadway repairs along Lillyhill Drive, addressing deteriorated pavement conditions to improve drivability and safety in a well-traveled residential corridor. The work reflects the City's responsive, field-driven approach to maintaining local streets and extending the life of existing infrastructure. Crews will continue targeted roadway maintenance throughout the community as conditions are identified and resources allow. These improvements support City Council goals by enhancing neighborhood quality of life, promoting safe and accessible streets, and demonstrating the City's

continued commitment to visible, day-to-day maintenance. Residents can report concerns by calling 760-326-5700 (press 9) or using the Needles Connect app on Google Play Store (Android) and Apple Store (iOS)**.** Together, we continue to make Needles a brighter and more vibrant place to live.

6. **Storm Preparedness & Weather Response**
   The City of Needles began the new year with a winter storm that brought steady precipitation throughout the week. City crews proactively prepared ahead of the storm by inspecting equipment, fueling vehicles, and placing staff on standby to ensure a timely response. Throughout the event, departments closely monitored conditions to protect public safety and maintain essential services. The primary operational impact was the temporary closure of the J Street Underpass due to water accumulation, which was implemented as a precautionary safety measure. No major damage to City infrastructure was reported, and no injuries occurred. Crews remained engaged through the week to monitor drainage conditions and ensure the underpass could be safely reopened.

7. **Community Partnership & Recreation Support – Elks Gratitude Grant**
   The City of Needles and its Recreation Services Department received generous community support through a Gratitude Grant awarded by the Elks National Foundation, with local sponsorship from the Needles Elks Lodge #1608. Exalted Ruler Brian Dooley presented two grant checks totaling $2,000 to support City recreation facilities. The funding included $1,250 for the Recreation Center and $750 for the Aquatic Center, directly benefiting youth programming and community recreation services. The checks were formally received by Jennifer Valenzuela, Recreation Services Manager. This contribution reflects the Elks' continued commitment to investing in local communities and supporting programs that serve families and youth. The City extends its sincere appreciation to the Needles Elks Lodge for their ongoing partnership and support of community recreation in Needles.

8. **Needles Little League Home Run Derby Fundraiser**
   The Needles Little League is hosting a Home Run Derby on **Saturday, January 24 at 12:00 p.m.** at Ed Parry Field as its final fundraiser ahead of the regular season. The all-ages, family-friendly event is intended to encourage broad community participation while raising funds for the Little League Shade Structure Project. The derby will feature a structured format with participant awards, an open snack bar, and live music by DJ Loke. The City supports the event, which aligns with City Council goals to promote youth recreation, strengthen community partnerships, and enhance community amenities that improve quality of life. If you have any questions please reach out to Josh Raley directly at 760-220-7886.

9. **Needles Sunday Market – Santa Fe Park**
   The Needles Sunday Market at Santa Fe Park continues to build momentum as a weekly destination that supports local entrepreneurs, activates public space, and encourages community gathering. Vendor participation remains strong, offering a growing mix of small-batch and specialty products that contribute to a lively, family-friendly atmosphere. The Market provides residents and visitors with a consistent opportunity to shop local while enjoying one of the City's central community spaces. The Needles Sunday Market is held every Sunday from **8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** and will continue through **March 31, 2026**. Interested vendors may contact Market Manager Patrick Lauterio at (760) 848-8289 or needlesfarmers@gmail.com.

10. **Community Events Calendar Now Live**
    The City's new website now features a **Community Events Calendar**—a single source 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.

1. ROUTE 66 CENTENNIAL

LIVE, WORK, & PLAY ON THE COLORADO RIVER

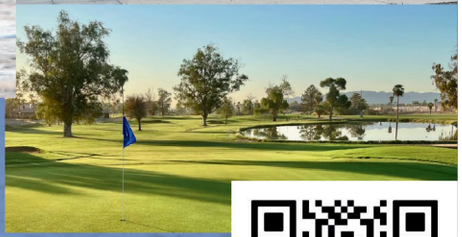
NEEDLES

CALIFORNIA

FOUNDED 1883

CELEBRATE ROUTE 66 CENTENNIAL WITH NEEDLES IN 2026

an original Route 66 town



CITY OF NEEDLES CALIFORNIA

NEEDLES VISITOR CENTER
950 Front St. Ste. 9
Needles, CA.. 92363

CITYOFNEEDLES.COM

#MAKENEEDLESYOURDESTINATION

2. NEEDLES TOURNAMENT OF ROSES

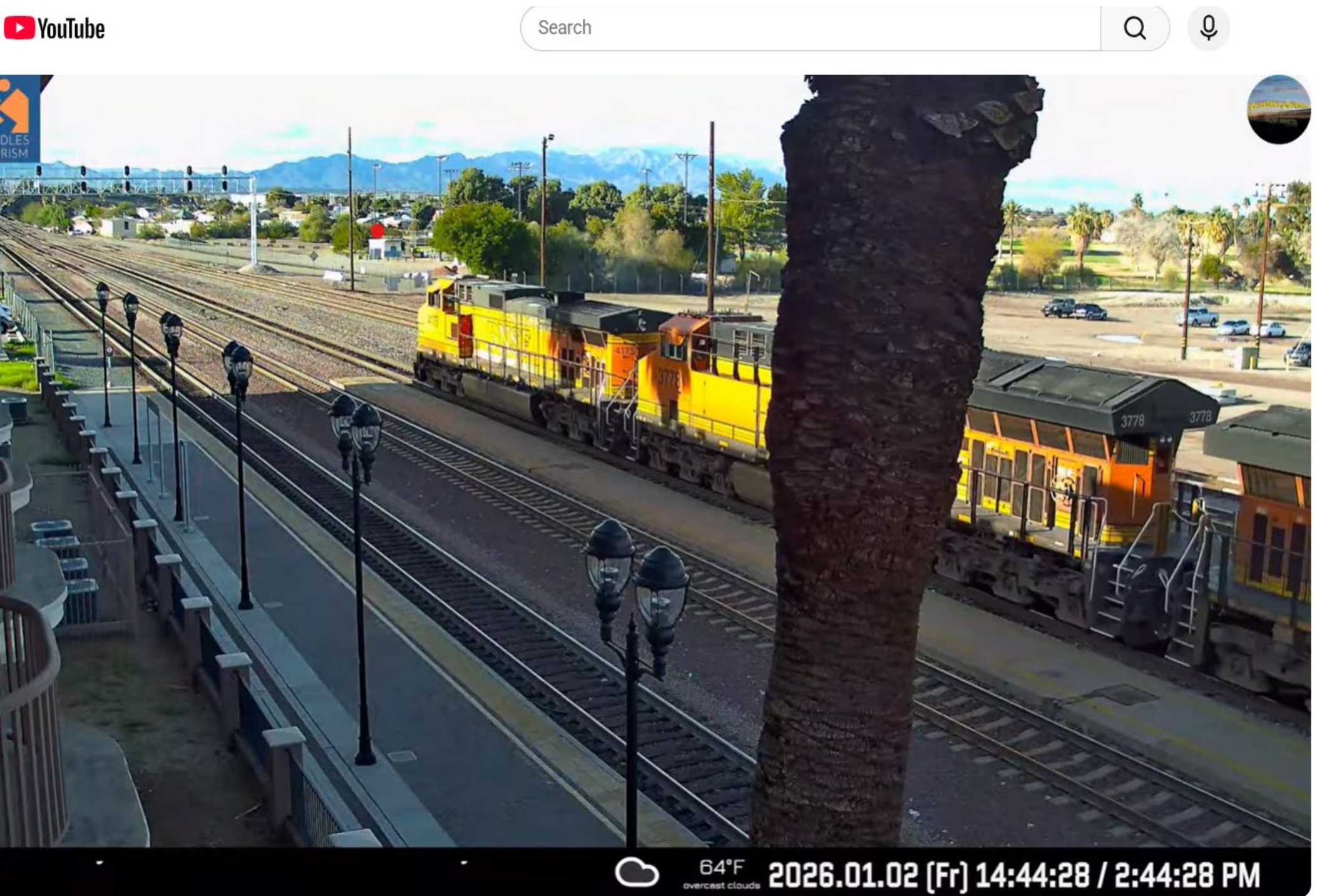
Road to the Rose Parade - Route 66

Tournament of Roses®
15.7K subscribers

Subscribe

21 Share Save Download

3. RAILCAM TOURISM VISIBILITY



5. NEEDLES PRIDE

7. ELKS DONATION RECREATION CENTER

Elks National Foundation. Inc.

Elks Needles Lodge #1608

Community Investment Program

Gratitude Grant

Exalted Ruler Brian Dooley presented two checks, $1,250 Rec Center, and $750 Aquatic Center, to Needles Recreation Services Manager Jennifer Valenzuela

8. NEEDLES LITTLE LEAGUE

NEEDLES
LITTLE LEAGUE

HOME RUN DERBY

SATURDAY, JANUARY 24 • 12:00 PM START

Ed Parry Field • NEEDLES, C.A

Come swing for the fences at the 2026 Needles Little League Home Run Derby! Open to all ages – from youth to adults!

Snack bar will be serving food.

Divisions

- 6 & Under
- 7–8
- 9–10
- 11–12
- 13–15
- 19+ Adult Division

(Legends Division 40+ if turnout allows)

REGISTRATION

Sign up early or register at the field starting 11:15 AM

Entry Fees

- Ages 6 & Under – $5
- Ages 7–12 – $10
- Ages 13–18 – $15
- Adults – $20

– Extra 10 swings – $5

– Second-chance swing – $2

Format

- 10–12 swings per hitter
- Swing-off for ties

Awards

- Movie tickets
- Snack bar bucks