



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: January 10, 2024

1. On **Tuesday, January 7, 2024**, the **Housing Authority of the City of Needles** proudly hosted a special ribbon-cutting ceremony to launch the **Veterans Housing Program**, marking a significant milestone in addressing the housing needs of homeless veterans. Despite **40 mph winds**, the community gathered at **1624 W Broadway**, the site of the newly repurposed **former Sage Motel**, to celebrate this transformative initiative. The event brought together **community members, city officials, city staff**, representatives from the **Chamber of Commerce**, the **Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 404**, Needles Unified School District, and staff from the offices of **State Senator Padilla** and **Assemblymember Gonzalez**. **Commendations** were presented from **Senator Padilla, Assemblymember Gonzalez**, and **Congressman Ruiz**. While **Congressman Ruiz's office** was not present, his commendation was delivered by **Senator Padilla's office**, recognizing the **City Council's dedication** to supporting veterans and ensuring they have access to the resources and care they deserve.
The **Veterans Housing Program** combines **HUD rental assistance** with **VA case management services**, offering a comprehensive solution to support homeless veterans. Since **May 2024**, nine **HUD-VASH vouchers** have been issued, providing critical housing and support services. This initiative reflects the successful collaboration between the **Housing Authority of the City of Needles** and dedicated **community partners**. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who joined us in celebrating this important achievement. Together, we are striving to ensure our **veterans** receive the **dignity, care, and stability** they have earned through their service. **Refer to the attached images.**
2. The City of Needles stands in solidarity with those impacted by the devastating fires in Southern California. These tragic events have upended lives and entire communities, and our hearts go out to everyone affected. We also commend the tireless efforts of city staff, public officials, and volunteers providing mutual aid to assist those in need during this difficult time. The wildfires in Los Angeles, now designated as a federal disaster, highlight the importance of fire prevention and

preparedness. The City of Needles is committed to learning from these events and implementing proactive measures to protect our community.

This week, the San Bernardino County Emergency Operations Center activated a January Red Flag Wind Event for our area. The City of Needles responded using the Needles Connect App to inform the community about the National Weather Service's Wind Advisory, with wind speeds reaching 50–60 mph. City staff advised residents to trim tree branches away from homes and power lines and secure outdoor objects such as furniture and trash cans. Thanks to the diligent efforts of city staff, no power outages occurred within the City of Needles. The power outage at Park Moabi was also resolved promptly, ensuring minimal disruption. In collaboration with the San Bernardino County Fire Department (SBCFD), city staff has initiated plans to enhance fire safety preparedness and provide the functionality of all hydrants. Fire prevention is a shared responsibility, and we urge residents to identify and address fire hazards on their properties.

JJ DeLeon, General Manager of the Rivers Edge Golf Course, led efforts to identify and remove dead overhanging trees, palm trees, and brush on the golf course to reduce fire risks. Residents are encouraged to follow suit by maintaining their properties and reporting fire hazards to the City of Needles Code Enforcement at 760-326-2115 (ext. 123) or through the Needles Connect App, available on the [Google Play Store](#) or the [Apple Store](#). The City of Needles has also been working on its Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP), a five-year strategic initiative funded by FEMA. The LHMP aims to enhance preparation for natural and human-caused hazards, reduce risks, and make Needles eligible for FEMA grants and state disaster assistance. Community participation is critical to the plan's success. We invite residents and businesses to share input through surveys, public meetings, and feedback opportunities to help identify strategies to protect lives, property, and resources. [Click here](#) to complete a survey and learn more about the [LHMP](#). Together, we can build a safer and more resilient Needles.

Many community members have asked how they can support those affected by the Los Angeles wildfires. Donations can be made to the Emergency Network Los Angeles by [clicking the provided link](#) or to the American Red Cross Response and Disaster Relief. Visit the [American Red Cross California Wildfires website](#) for information on open shelters and to donate. Thank you for your continued efforts to keep Needles safe and support those in need during this challenging time. Together, we can ensure a brighter and more prepared future for our community.

3. City staff met with an Assemblymember Gonzalez representative this week to discuss key **community needs** in Needles. The closure of the city's **only grocery store** in **2014** left residents without access to **healthy and affordable food**, earning the city a **"Food Desert" designation** in **2023**. Efforts are ongoing to attract a **grocery retailer**, leveraging available programs to address this critical issue.

Housing shortages remain another pressing concern, with **600 new jobs** created by the city's **\$50 million cannabis industry**. However, **90% of employees** live in

Arizona or Nevada due to limited local housing options. Recognized through the **Prohousing Designation program**, Needles is conducting a **housing study** supported by the **Gates Foundation** and advocating for **streamlined processes** to reduce construction costs and encourage housing development.

Infrastructure improvements are also a priority, with the city investing **\$8.5 million** since **2020** to treat **45% of its 45-mile road network** through the **15-year Pavement Management Plan**. Additional funding is being sought for projects like the **River Road & River Street Rehabilitation** to enhance **access and safety**. Similarly, protecting the city's **Colorado River water rights** remains critical as agreements governing the river's operation expire in **2026**. Efforts include applying for funding to **modernize irrigation systems** and reduce **water consumption**.

The **Needles Aquatic Center Renovation** is another top priority. While the city's recent **funding request** was not approved, efforts continue to secure the **\$5 million** needed for upgrades to enhance the center's role as a **cooling facility during extreme heat events**, bolstering **community resilience**. Additionally, the city's **Off-Highway Motor Vehicle (OHMV) Pilot Program**, set to run through **2028**, integrates OHMVs into the **transportation framework**, supporting **tourism** and **local businesses**. Continued **legislative support** will be crucial to extend the program's benefits.

Finally, Needles is pursuing a **\$60 million Vehicle Charging Hub** to advance **renewable energy** and **EV infrastructure**. This initiative aligns with **California's clean energy goals** and enhances local services, attracts visitors, and stimulates **economic growth**. The city appreciates **Assemblymember Gonzalez's support** and looks forward to continued collaboration to address these vital community needs.

Notable Video Highlights: Celebrating This Year's Achievements

- **Clean California Community Designation Program:**
Governor Gavin Newsom recognized the City of Needles as part of this statewide initiative to create **cleaner, safer, and more sustainable environments**. As a proud participant, the city received **\$2.4 million** to revitalize [Bob Belts Beach Park](#). This project earned the **2024 American Public Works Association Southern California Chapter BEST Project of the Year** award in the [Recreation & Athletic Facilities](#) category.
- **Weather Channel Feature:**
Needles was showcased on the [Weather Channel's America's Morning Headquarters](#), including a video highlighting [Jack Smith Park's Marilyn Hohstadt Mathews Walking Trail](#), a community favorite.
- **Behavioral Health Clubhouse Funding:**
Congressman Raul Ruiz secured a [\\$1 million appropriation for the Needles Behavioral Health Clubhouse](#), a vital resource that enhances community access to **behavioral health services**.
- **Celebration of Needles' History:**
The city's [unique history and historical charm](#) continue to attract visitors and foster **community pride**.

- **2024 State of the City Address:**

A link to the **2024 State of the City Address** by the **Mayor** is available, including both a [recording](#) and [presentation slides](#), offering a comprehensive overview of the city's **accomplishments and vision for the future**.

4. Save the date for the **3rd Annual Job and Resource Fair** on **March 19, 2025**, at the **El Garces Historic Train Depot**, located at 950 Front Street, Needles, CA. The event, hosted by **San Bernardino County Supervisor Dawn Rowe**, will take place from **10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** and promises to be an invaluable opportunity for residents, city staff, and public officials to connect with agencies and organizations providing essential services. This dynamic event will feature access to vital resources such as record issuance, document recording, property assessments, expungement assistance, and specialized support for veterans, including VA benefits and identification cards. Non-profits like **IEHP** and **Tri-State Community Health Center** will also be on-site to offer additional resources.

Employers and resource providers are encouraged to showcase their organizations, meet potential employees, and promote their services in a vibrant, engaging environment. **For those interested in participating, registration is [available online](#) or refer to the attached flyer.** Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request for individuals with disabilities; please call **1-800-735-2922** before the event to arrange assistance. Don't miss this opportunity to engage with your community and take advantage of the valuable services and connections available at this event.

5. **Tomorrow, January 11, 2024**, the **Needles Unified School District (NUSD) Associated Student Body (ASB)** and **Interact Club** will come together to paint a new rendering on the **expression wall** at **Duke Watkins Park**. **Come join them as part of this exciting event** to support **creativity** and **community spirit**. This collaboration highlights the community's dedication to fostering **creativity** and celebrating the **vibrant additions** to the park. The **expression wall**, a key feature of the **\$3,965,400 Duke Watkins Park Improvement Project**, serves as a platform for **artistic expression** and **community engagement**. Designed to inspire **creativity**, this vibrant **graffiti art wall** has quickly become a symbol of **artistic collaboration** and **community pride**. This initiative not only fulfills a **requirement** of the park improvement project but also emphasizes the importance of nurturing the **arts** and bringing the **community** together to enhance this **dynamic new feature** of **Duke Watkins Park**.
6. The **City Council** has prioritized **fostering economic growth and business development** by enhancing public relations to position Needles as a business-friendly community. This includes **streamlining the permitting process to encourage** investment and maintaining proactive communication with current applicants to ensure their projects progress smoothly at the City and County levels. This week, City staff connected with the owners of West Side Chevron to provide updates on their permitting process, and we are thrilled to announce the opening of [Krispy Krunchy Chicken](#), which is anticipated for mid-February. This new business will expand dining options and contribute to the local economy.

Additionally, we are excited to highlight the success of recently opened businesses, such as **Needles Smash Burger**, located at 2205 Needles Highway. Now under new management, Needles Smash Burger offers a full menu of specialty burgers, salads, and fries, with [online orders available](#) or by phone at **760-983-7865**. These developments exemplify the City's commitment to supporting local entrepreneurs and creating a vibrant business ecosystem in Needles. We remain dedicated to working closely with current and prospective businesses to ensure our community remains a welcoming and thriving hub for growth and opportunity.

7. The **City Council** remains dedicated to enhancing **Needles' visual appeal** and **quality of life** through targeted **beautification** and **clean-up projects**. This week, the **Public Works team** initiated efforts to **refresh red curb markings** along **Needles Highway**, starting near **Carl's Jr.** and moving toward **R Street**. This **systematic approach** ensures that each section is completed thoroughly before transitioning to the next, ultimately covering **key thoroughfares** and eventually reaching the **East Side** of the city. These efforts are part of the City's broader commitment to maintaining **public spaces** and **infrastructure**, reflecting our shared goals of **stewardship**, **accountability**, and **community pride**. Residents are encouraged to play an **active role** in these initiatives by notifying **staff** by using the **Needles Connect App**, available on the [Google Play Store](#) and [Apple Store](#) or by calling **City Hall at 760-326-2115**. These ongoing projects highlight the **dedication of City staff** to creating a **clean, welcoming environment** for all. Attached are **images capturing the team's progress**, showcasing their **hard work** and **commitment** to keeping **Needles beautiful**. Together, we can ensure a **brighter** and **more inviting community** for residents and visitors alike.
8. Rivers Edge Golf Course continues to exceed expectations, with an impressive **8,445 rounds of golf played** through December, marking a remarkable performance halfway through the season. The course remains a hub for community engagement, and we're thrilled to host the **Needles Women's Club Fundraiser on January 20, 2025**. This event promises to bring the community together for a meaningful cause. Don't miss your chance to participate—**book your spot today** by calling **760-326-3931** or visiting our [website](#). JJ DeLeon is ready to assist those looking to host their tournaments. He can be reached at **760-326-3931** for inquiries and arrangements. We are proud of Rivers Edge's continued success and are committed to ensuring it remains a **valued asset** for our community. In addition to these achievements, the **\$8.9 million Well #11 Water Treatment Project** has introduced an essential enhancement to the course. **Protective fencing** was recently installed along **Hole #5**, adjacent to the water treatment facility. Completed by **Cal-Zone**, this addition significantly improves the safety and security of the project while preserving the quality of the golf course experience. We invite you to take a closer look at the new fencing through the **attached images**, highlighting our commitment to maintaining a safe and enjoyable environment at Rivers Edge.
9. On **January 14, 2024**, the Needles Women's Club will host a Barbecue Lunch Fundraiser to benefit women's empowerment, youth programs, scholarships, and civic initiatives. For just \$10, enjoy a delicious meal featuring a pork sandwich, coleslaw, chips, and cookies! Order your lunch today by [clicking this link](#). Meals can

be picked up at the Needles Women's Club, located at 305 W. Broadway Street, or delivered for orders of three or more. Don't miss the chance to support your local Women's Club! Place your order **by 5:30 p.m. on January 13, 2025.**

10. The **Needles Pride Program** is a community-driven initiative that enhances neighborhoods by fostering pride, improving property upkeep, and ensuring compliance with city codes. This program emphasizes well-maintained landscapes, eliminating visible outside storage, parking properly, removing inoperative or abandoned vehicles from public view, and appropriately placing trash containers. Residents can schedule up to **three free bulky item pick-ups annually** by calling **1-800-364-3754** to support these efforts. Additionally, we encourage residents to join these efforts by reporting public nuisances to the **City of Needles Code Enforcement** at **760-326-2115 (ext. 123)** or through the **Needles Connect app**, available on the [Google Play Store](#) for Android or the [Apple Store](#) for iOS devices. Your input is invaluable in helping us maintain and enhance the community. Through a combination of community engagement, organized clean-ups, and collaboration with the **Code Enforcement team**, the program aims to create a cleaner, safer, and more vibrant city. **Please refer to the attached updated flyer showcasing** the program's details to guide residents in participating in this impactful initiative.

7. **IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES:**

- **January 18—Community Clean-Up:** Join **Councilmember Longacre** for the second community clean-up effort, which will remove illegal dumping and litter from **Third Street** near the former **Center for Change** at **300 H Street, Needles, CA 92363**. The event begins at **10:00 AM**.
- **January 25—Community Clean-Up:** From 8:00 AM to noon, trash and bulky items can be disposed of for free at various city locations: Gates (Safari Drive), North K (near the underpass and BNSF Road), Vista (Nikki Bunch Ball Field), and Cibola (Robuffa near Public Works Yard). Note: Hazardous waste and specific materials are not accepted.
- **February 15—Route 66 Information Fair:** The 2025 Route 66 Information Fair, hosted by the Friends of El Garces, will feature Route 66 vendors, tours, and presenters. More information will follow.
- **April 21-27—Route 66 Bike Week:** Experience the adventure of a lifetime by riding the historic stretch of **Route 66** from Needles to Seligman. This weeklong event celebrates the freedom of the open road and the vibrant culture of Route 66. For more information, visit their [website](#).
- **May 15, 2024—Run for the Wall (RFTW):** This annual event honoring Vietnam Veterans will welcome over 300 motorcyclists as they journey across the country. This meaningful tribute will take place at the historic El Garces, with the riders expected to arrive at noon.

1. VETERANS HOUSING RIBBON CUTTING





Job and Resource Fair

**March 19, 2025
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.**

EMPLOYERS & RESOURCES PROVIDERS

Join us for our upcoming Job Fair and take advantage of this excellent opportunity to connect with a diverse pool of talent.

Showcase your organization, meet prospective employees, and promote your resources to job seekers in a dynamic and engaging environment.

This WIOA Title-I financially assisted program and EDD, is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Requests for services, aids, and/or alternate formats need to be made prior to the event by calling 1-800-735-2922. TTY users, please call the California Relay Service 711. For federal funding disclosure information, visit Workforce.SBCounty.gov/about/ffd.

Workforce.SBCounty.gov

LOCATION

El Garces Historic Train Depot
950 Front Street
Needles, CA 92363

SAVE THE DATE!



REGISTER HERE:

[HDHE0319.eventbrite.com](https://hdhe0319.eventbrite.com)

America's JobCenter
of CaliforniaSM

7. PUBLIC WORKS RED CURBS



8. GOLF COURSE FENCE



10. NEEDLES PRIDE



NEEDLES PRIDE

Needles residents care about their community and so should you! The Needles Pride initiative is a neighborhood focus program aimed at improving the community by working in partnership with property owners, area residents, and local businesses to clean up neighborhoods and maintain compliance with City Codes.

Please take the time to evaluate your property and correct any violations you may have.

How to Participate in the City-Wide Clean-Up



BEAUTIFICATION

Maintain Landscaping

Maintain landscape in healthy condition by proper irrigating, trimming, edging, and removing weeds, and dead plants



Clear Storage

Outside storage including but not limited to furniture, household items, yard equipment, building material, vehicle parts, and appliances must be kept out of public eye.



Park in Designated Areas

Vehicles are required to be parked on existing driveways or approved surfaces. Parking is not allowed on dirt, vacant lots, front yards, or decorative landscapes.



CODE VIOLATIONS

Inoperative Vehicles

Vehicles that are unlicensed, wrecked, damaged, or in disrepair may not be stored in public view.



Trash Containers

Trash containers shall not be stored in front yards or on sidewalks except when placed in areas of collection at the time permitted.



Bulky Items

Keep sidewalks clear of discarded household items such as furniture, appliances, electronics, and more. You may schedule up to three (3) bulky item pick ups per year by calling Republic Services at 928-758-9135.



If you have questions about the Needles Pride initiative contact Code Enforcement Officer Bernie Hatz at (760) 326-5700, ext. 129. You can also conveniently reach out through the Needles Connect app, available for free on Android and Apple devices. Let's work together to make Needles shine!

