



## Folks come from far and wide to say ‘Happy Birthday’ to Needles

By JENNIFER DENEVAN, Needles Desert Star

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National Teen Miss Route 66 Riley Hunsucker waves to the crowd during Saturday’s parade celebrating 100 years of incorporation as the city of Needles, Calif. The parade, which capped the multi-day celebration, was laid out on original alignments of the Mother Road through the famous city. **ROBIN RICHARDS/News West**

NEEDLES — Diners had the El Garces Harvey House experience while celebrating Needles’ Centennial at the Needles Chamber of Commerce annual dinner Oct. 4.

The dinner kicked off the city’s celebration of 100 years of incorporation. Many dignitaries were present at the dinner including District 33 Assemblyman Tim Donnelly; state Senator Jean Fuller of District 18; Bullhead City Mayor Jack Hakim, Bullhead City Vice-Mayor Kathy Bruck, California Highway Patrol Needles Station commander Lt. John Tyler; Capt. Ross Tarangle, of the San Bernardino County Sheriff Department’s Colorado River Station and many more. **Needles City Council members were also in attendance, along with new city manager Rick Daniels.**

Donnelly was one of several speakers featured during the dinner. He recognized several Needles residents as Citizens of Distinction.

He said the more people he met, the more he liked Needles. He called it a distinct honor and privilege to present a resolution honoring Needles’ centennial.

He also remarked on the high school students who were acting as Harvey Girls and Boys for the night and were serving the dinner. He said he’s impressed with how everyone he met cared so deeply about their town.

He said he was honored to be in Needles for the celebration. He hopes to come back some time soon, he continued.

Fuller also had a chance to speak and present a proclamation to Mayor Ed Paget. She said the centennial committee and the chamber of commerce all clearly worked hard on the celebration like they're brothers and sisters and put in such effort to make it wonderful.

She thanked the residents for making the city so great because that's what, in turn, makes America great, she said. In her short time visiting Needles, she said she already felt like part of the community. She is scheduled to come back and visit the schools, the hospital and other areas.

Daniels said he was humbled to stand before the audience and with all the people of distinction in the community. He talked about the past and how important and varied it is; that rich history is the basis for Needles' greatness and all should be proud and thankful for it.

He said the challenge will be creating a future that will be remembered 100 years from now. Continuing to keep Needles great and making it even better will mean establishing strong partnerships with all the entities including the state and federal governments and all the local entities, he said.

"The next 100 years begins today, it begins tonight, it begins right now," he said. "As I look around as a newbie to this town, I'm so impressed with the leadership that's here, the people that I've seen commit time and resources to celebrate the centennial and move this community forward."

Hakim also spoke at the dinner. He presented a proclamation to Paget. He said Needles remains an important part of the backbone of American shipping with the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad, one of the larger employers in the Tri-state.

He said Needles continues to be a destination point for Route 66 and Colorado River recreation. Bullhead City congratulates Needles and its residents for their dedication and hard work that maintain a positive community environment now and for generations to come, he continued.

Jim Lopez, city council member, focused on the leadership of the city council, the community and others who are helping to get Needles back on track economically. The future looks bright but it will take everyone to make it happen, he said.

Jerry Lewis, Palo Verde Community College board member, rounded out the evening by talking about Needles' history. He gave an historical narrative of Needles' entire history and highlighted community members who have influenced the progress of the city.

The dinner was served by Needles High School students in the Regional Occupation Program classes. They were dressed as Harvey Girls and Boys to help set the atmosphere.

Slideshows featuring Needles' past were playing as the dinner was served. Much of the discussions by diners focused on Needles and getting caught up with each others' lives.

The Centennial Celebration continued Saturday with an observance of Ten-Ten, the Republic of China's National Day; a parade, a salute to veterans, pumpkin races and a barbecue.

A farmers' market was also held early in the day Saturday. There were various food and merchant vendors who stayed for most of the day to help celebrate.