



## *U.S. Department of Justice*

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### PRESS RELEASE

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**JUSTICE DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES LOCAL RECIPIENT OF  
ANNUAL PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

Ron Lopez, the Law Enforcement Coordinator for the United States Attorney's Office who heads the District of New Mexico's Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) Task Force, has been presented the Department of Justice 2010 Outstanding Individual Contribution to a Violent Crime Task Force Award. Mr. Lopez was recognized today during the annual PSN Achievement Awards ceremony hosted by Acting Deputy Attorney General Gary G. Grindler at the PSN National Conference in New Orleans.

Award recipients were chosen from a large pool of nominations submitted by U.S. Attorneys' Offices across the nation. Mr. Lopez was recognized for implementing a drug, gang and gun crime reduction strategy called "Project Safe Pueblos," which addresses the unique geographic, cultural and jurisdictional aspects of several northern New Mexico Indian Pueblos and the Navajo Nation.

According to U.S. Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales, "Mr. Lopez brought together an unprecedented level of cooperation among federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies and the community. His Task Force has overcome long distances, hundreds of

square miles of vast remote target area, multiple languages, and limited tribal infrastructure to successfully implement a program that seeks to clear housing clusters of gangs, illegal guns and drugs. The efforts of his Task Force have resulted in a dramatic reduction in crime and an improved sense of security among residents of New Mexico's Pueblos and the Navajo Nation." Mr. Gonzales also noted that the innovative Project Safe Pueblos has become a model for other Native American crime interdiction and prevention projects.

PSN is a nationwide commitment by the Department of Justice to reduce gun and gang crime in America by networking existing local programs that target gun and gun crime and providing these programs with additional tools necessary to be successful.