

For Immediate Release  
April 14, 2011

**SOCORRO WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY**  
**TO FEDERAL FIREARMS OFFENSE**

ALBUQUERQUE – United States Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales announced that, this morning, Socorro resident **Sandy Lee Bryant**, 55, entered a guilty plea to being a felon in possession of a firearm and ammunition in federal court in Albuquerque. At sentencing, Bryant faces up to ten-years imprisonment and a maximum \$250,000 fine. Bryant has been on release under pretrial supervision since she was arraigned on criminal charges on March 6, 2009, and will continue on release pending her sentencing hearing, which has yet to be scheduled.

Bryant was indicted by a federal grand jury on February 26, 2009, and was charged with (1) assaulting a federal employee; (2) using a firearm in relation to a crime of violence; and (3) being a felon in possession of a firearm and ammunition. According to the indictment, Bryant was precluded from possessing firearms and ammunition because she previously was convicted of the unlawful manufacture of a controlled substance in Oregon. Bryant entered a guilty plea today to a one-count information charging her as a felon in possession of a firearm under a plea agreement with the United States Attorney's Office. Under the terms of the plea agreement, the charges in the indictment will be dismissed after Bryant is sentenced.

In her plea agreement, Bryant admitted that, on October 10, 2007, she fired a shotgun at four U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) contractors and who were surveying property adjacent to Bryant's residence that is part of the BOR's Middle Rio Grande Project near Socorro, New Mexico. Between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. that morning, the surveyors saw Bryant from a distance of 50 yards and waved at her. Bryant responded by going into her residence and returning with a shotgun. Bryant admitted firing a round at the surveyors – which went over

their heads – because she did not want them waving at her. Bryant then returned to her residence and re-emerged a short time later and fired another shot with the same shotgun. The plea agreement states that New Mexico State Police (NMSP) officers responded to a call from the surveyors. Although the officers were not able to locate Bryant, they did recover her shotgun and two spent shotgun shells. On the following day, NMSP officers interviewed Bryant; she admitted firing her weapon and claimed to have done so because she was scared and was trying to scare the people away. However, the investigation revealed that BOR representatives, including one of the surveyors present on October 10, 2007, had been in contact with Bryant on several prior occasions regarding their work in the area.

The case was investigated by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation with assistance from the NMSP, and is being prosecuted by Jack E. Burkhead.

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