

For Immediate Release  
May 13, 2011

**ZUNI PUEBLO MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO  
FEDERAL CHILD SEX ABUSE OFFENSE**

ALBUQUERQUE – This morning, **Alphonso Chavez**, a 48-year-old member of the Pueblo of Zuni, pleaded guilty to sexually abusing a child under the age of sixteen in federal court in Albuquerque. Chavez entered the plea under a plea agreement with the United States Attorney's Office which requires that Chavez serve a ten-year term of imprisonment to be followed by a supervised release term of at least five-years. Chavez will be required to register as a sex offender after he completes his prison sentence. Chavez has been in federal custody since his arrest on January 19, 2011 and remains detained pending his sentencing hearing, which has yet to be scheduled.

United States Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales said that, on January 12, 2011, a federal grand jury returned a two-count indictment charging Chavez with (i) aggravated sexual assault of a child who had not attained the age of 12; and (ii) sexual abuse of a child who had not attained the age of 16. The indictment alleges that the first offense occurred between January 1, 2006 and May 31, 2006, and the second assault occurred between March 1, 2008 and May 27, 2008. Both offenses allegedly occurred in Indian Country.

This morning, Chavez pleaded guilty to Count 2 of the indictment. In his plea agreement, Chavez admitted that, between March 1, 2008 and May 27, 2008, he sexually assaulted a child under the age of 16 by touching her genitalia. He further admitted that he engaged in this unlawful act to gratify his sexual desire and despite the fact that the child was in fear at the time he committed the offense. Chavez acknowledged that the offense took place within the Pueblo of Zuni. Under the terms of the plea agreement, the first count of the

indictment will be dismissed after Chavez has been sentenced.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation with assistance from the Pueblo of Zuni Police Department, and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jennifer M. Rozzoni.

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