

For Immediate Release
August 11, 2011

**KEWA PUEBLO MAN RECEIVES 30-MONTH PRISON SENTENCE FOR
FEDERAL ASSAULT WITH DANGEROUS WEAPON CONVICTION**

ALBUQUERQUE – Today in federal court in Santa Fe, **Scott Daniel Benavidez**, 29, was sentenced to a 30-month term of imprisonment to be followed by two years of supervised release based on his conviction for assaulting a tribal police officer with a dangerous weapon. Benavidez, an enrolled member of the Pueblo of Kewa, has been in federal custody since entering his guilty plea on May 11, 2011.

United States Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales said that Benavidez assaulted an officer of the Pueblo of Santa Ana Police Department (SAPD) by driving a vehicle towards the officer and striking him on July 26, 2010. Court records indicate that Benavidez intentionally struck the SAPD officer with his vehicle while the officer was directing traffic at the entrance to the village of Santa Ana during a tribal feast day celebration. Other officers pursued Benavidez as he left the area until Benavidez lost control of his vehicle and crashed. The officer was not seriously injured.

In entering his plea, Benavidez admitted that he intentionally struck the SAPD officer because he did not want the officer and his colleagues to know that he had alcohol in the car contrary to tribal law. Benavidez explained that, on July 26, 2010, he and his girlfriend attended the annual feast day celebration at the Pueblo of Santa Ana and, when the two were leaving the Pueblo, he noticed several police officers were directing traffic to and from the parking area. When one of the officers asked Benavidez to stop his vehicle, Benavidez panicked because he had alcohol in the car. Benavidez admitted that, as officers were surrounding his vehicle, he accelerated and struck one of the officers and then fled the scene.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation with assistance from the SAPD, and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jack E. Burkhead.

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