

For Immediate Release
June 21, 2011

**SANTA CLARA PUEBLO MAN PLEADS GUILTY
TO FEDERAL CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE OFFENSE**

ALBUQUERQUE – This morning in federal court in Albuquerque, **Steven Henry Sisneros**, 27, entered a guilty plea to an indictment charging him with sexual abuse of a minor. At sentencing, Sisneros faces up to 15 years imprisonment, a maximum \$250,000 fine, and a minimum five-year term of supervised release. Sisneros also will be required to register as a sex offender. Sisneros has been in federal custody since his arrest on March 26, 2011, and remains detained pending his sentencing hearing, which has yet to be scheduled.

United States Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales said that Sisneros, an enrolled member of the Pueblo of Santa Clara in Rio Arriba County, was arrested on March 26, 2011 based on a criminal complaint alleging sexual abuse of a minor in Indian Country. More specifically, the complaint alleged that Sisneros engaged in a sexual act with a child, who had attained the age of 12 years, but not the age of 16 years. Sisneros was indicted on this offense on April 13, 2011.

According to the criminal complaint, on March 25, 2011, the Santa Clara Tribal Police Department went to Sisneros' residence on the Pueblo of Santa Clara in connection with an investigation into a 15-year old runaway female (the child). Although the officers did not make contact with Sisneros at this time, within thirty minutes, the child turned herself in at the Tribal Police Department offices. During interviews with a Santa Clara Tribal Police Officer and a Special Agent of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the child reported that she had been staying with Sisneros since March 21, 2011 and had engaged in sexual acts with Sisneros on multiple occasions at his residence since that date. The child also reported that Sisneros was aware that she was only 15-years old.

Court filings reflect that, on March 25, 2011, after being advised of his constitutional right to remain silent, Sisneros confessed to having sex with the child and further admitted knowing that the child was only 15 years of age. The records further reflect that, at the time Sisneros committed the offense to which he entered a guilty plea today, he was on supervised release from a 2005 federal conviction for aggravated sexual abuse.

The case was investigated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Justice Services, Northern Pueblos Agency and the Santa Clara Tribal Police Department, and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Mark T. Baker.

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