

ALBUQUERQUE – Acting U.S. Attorney James D. Tierney and Police Chief Timothy Trimble of the Zuni Pueblo Tribal Police Department announced that Justin Owen Poblano was sentenced Sept. 21, in federal court in Santa Fe, to five years in prison, including time already served, for his conviction on an aggravated child sexual abuse charge.

Poblano will be on supervised release for 15 years after completing his prison sentence and will be required to register as a sex offender.

Poblano, 25, an enrolled member and resident of Zuni Pueblo, was arrested in August 2012, on an indictment charging him with engaging in a sexual act with a child between 12 and 16 years of age.

The indictment alleged that Poblano committed the crime on June 10, 2012, on the Zuni Pueblo in McKinley County. Proceedings in the case were delayed during the pendency of competency proceedings, which concluded in October 2014, when the Court found him competent to stand trial. Poblano has remained in federal custody from the time of his arrest.

On July 12, Poblano pled guilty to a felony information charging him with aggravated sexual abuse. In entering the guilty plea, Poblano admitted that on June 10, 2012, while at a residence on the Zuni Pueblo, he forced the victim to engage in a sexual act.

This case was investigated by the Zuni Pueblo Tribal Police Department. Assistant U.S.

Attorney Kyle T. Nayback prosecuted this case as part of the Tribal Special Assistant U.S. Attorney (Tribal SAUSA) Pilot Project in the District of New Mexico, which is sponsored by the Justice Department's Office on Violence Against Women under a grant administered by the Pueblo of Laguna.

The Tribal SAUSA Pilot Project seeks to train tribal prosecutors in federal law, procedure and investigative techniques to increase the likelihood that every viable violent offense against Native American women is prosecuted in either federal court or tribal court, or both.

The Tribal SAUSA Pilot Project was largely driven by input gathered from annual tribal consultations on violence against women, and is another step in the Justice Department's on-going efforts to increase engagement, coordination and action on public safety in tribal communities.

The case also is being prosecuted under Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse.

Led by United States Attorneys' Offices and DOJ's Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims.