

Shiprock man sentenced to prison for assaulting a federal tribal officer

Written by Staff Reports

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ALBUQUERQUE – Abner Joe, 55, an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation who resides in Shiprock, N.M., was sentenced Oct. 12, in federal court in Albuquerque to 33 months in prison for assaulting a federal officer. Joe will be on supervised release for three years after completing his prison sentence.

The FBI and Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety arrested Joe on Aug. 10, 2016, on a criminal complaint charging him with assaulting a federal officer. According to the complaint, Joe assaulted a NNDPS officer on Aug. 4, 2016, by spitting on her and threatening her with a hammer and a wooden board. At the time, the officer was commissioned as a Special Federal Officer by the BIA's Office of Justice Services.

Joe was indicted on Aug. 23, 2016, and was charged with assaulting a federal officer with a dangerous weapon and assault involving physical contact. The indictment alleged that Joe committed the crimes on Aug. 4, 2016, on the Navajo Indian Reservation in San Juan County, N.M.

On July 12, Joe pled guilty to assaulting a federal officer. In entering the guilty plea, Joe admitted that on Aug. 4, 2016, he threatened two uniformed tribal officers as he approached them while holding a raised 2" x 4" board. He also admitted throwing a hammer at a federally commissioned tribal officer.

This case was investigated by the Farmington office of the FBI and the Shiprock office of NNDPS. Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael Murphy prosecuted the case.