

Sundance man pleads guilty to sex abuse charge

Written by Staff Reports

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ALBUQUERQUE – Mark Silva, 48, of Sundance, N.M., pled guilty Oct. 12, in federal court in Albuquerque to a sexual abuse charge. Under the terms of his plea agreement, Silva will be sentenced to 60 months of imprisonment followed by a term of supervised release to be determined by the court. Silva will also be required to register as a sex offender.

Silva was arrested on April 4, on an indictment charging him with sexual abuse on May 1, 2016, on the Navajo Indian Reservation in McKinley County.

During the proceedings, Silva pled guilty to the indictment and admitted that on May 1, 2016, he sexually abused a Navajo woman. Silva further admitted that he engaged in the sexual act while knowing that the victim was incapable of declining participation in or communicating unwillingness to engage in the sexual act. Silva remains in custody pending a sentencing hearing, which has yet to be scheduled.

This case was investigated by the Gallup office of the FBI. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Joseph M. Spindle pursuant to 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 women is prosecuted in either federal court or tribal court, or both. T

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he 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.