

Bloomfield man sentenced to prison for involuntary manslaughter

Written by Staff Reports

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ALBUQUERQUE – Thomas J. Yazzie, Jr., 52, an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation from Bloomfield, N.M., was sentenced Aug. 29, in federal court in Albuquerque, to 30 months in prison followed by two years of supervised release for his conviction on an involuntary manslaughter charge.

Yazzie was arrested on Feb. 7, on an indictment charging him with involuntary manslaughter. According to the indictment, Yazzie killed a man while driving under the influence of alcohol on the Navajo Indian Reservation in San Juan County, N.M., on May 10, 2016.

On March 30, Yazzie pled guilty to the indictment and admitted killing the victim, a passenger in his vehicle, by driving recklessly while under the influence of alcohol. Yazzie acknowledged that the alcohol rendered him incapable of exercising clear judgment and a steady hand in operating the vehicle.

This case was investigated by the Gallup office of the FBI, the Crownpoint office of the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety and the New Mexico State Police and was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael D. Murphy.