

Biographical Information for J. Michael Chavarria, Governor, Santa Clara Pueblo

J. Michael Chavarria is a longtime resident and member of Santa Clara Pueblo. Governor Chavarria has served in many roles within the Pueblo of Santa Clara Tribal Government.

J. Michael Chavarria has been elected to the position of Governor for 13 one-year terms, serving in 2006–2008 and then re-elected in 2014–Present (2023). Governor Chavarria currently serves in the capacity of the Chairman for the Eight Northern Indian Pueblo Council (ENIPC).

As Governor, Mr. Chavarria continues to work on the various restoration efforts of the Santa Clara Creek watershed stemming from the 2011 Las Conchas Fire and post-fire flooding impacts, and he advocates for the continuation and growth of tribal programs to protect Pueblo lands, resources, and the environment.

As the forestry director, Governor Chavarria served as the tribal coordinator for the emergency response efforts during the Las Conchas Fire and subsequent flooding events which devastated the Pueblo's natural resources, traditional cultural properties, infrastructure, and threatened homes in the community. Governor Chavarria established a project team of Pueblo departments and other federal entities, including FEMA, U.S Army Corps of Engineers, Fish and Wildlife, Forest Service, and the BIA, as well as the State of New Mexico Homeland Security, to consolidate efforts and establish mitigation and restoration schedules for the Pueblo.

Governor Chavarria has served five terms as the Tribal Co-chair for the EPA Region VI Tribal Operations Committee. Through this position, he has worked with other tribes in the region to identify issues during the caucus and then pressed the environmental issues of concern during the committee meetings. Governor Chavarria has also used this role to educate Regional Administrators Richard Greene and Al Armendariz on unique aspects of tribal government and history that should inform the federal decision-making process. As Tribal Co-chair Governor Chavarria gathered a tribal team to create the Region VI Transition Document, which currently serves to educate EPA officials on both a regional and national level.