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**Massive water shortages predicted  
Documentaries: Crumbling dams to deepen woes**

**By Jerd Smith**

The Southwest, plagued with drought as its population booms, is within decades of massive water shortages - made worse by crumbling pipelines and dams, according to two documentaries airing this week on public television.

*The American Southwest: Are We Running Dry?* includes segments on American Indian communities where water must be hauled by hand. It also features interviews with some of the West's most seasoned water experts, including Colorado Sen. Ken Salazar, a former state attorney general and water attorney.

"We subdued the West," executive producer Jim Thebaut said in an interview this week. "We built dams, we rechanneled rivers and built aqueducts to be able to develop in desert and semi-desert environments. Now, we're paying the price."

Thebaut said the film, narrated by actress Jane Seymour, is meant to make people aware of the many issues faced by the seven states of the Colorado River Basin: Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, New Mexico, Nevada, Arizona and California.

What makes the problems worse, Thebaut said, is a lack of comprehensive water planning.

"There is no regional perspective, no overall planning process on how we make decisions," he said.

In addition, he said, there is little being done to encourage states to be less reliant on the Colorado River and to implement land-use policies that minimize water use.

Still another documentary airing this week, *Liquid Assets*, looks at the aging water infrastructure in the West and elsewhere and examines the staggering costs of upgrading pipelines and reservoirs, some of which are nearly 100 years old.

Produced by Penn State University, *Liquid Assets* airs at 8 p.m. tonight and *Running Dry* airs at 9 p.m. Thursday on KRMA-Channel 6.