

November 14, 2007

**THE CHRONICLES GROUP AND WESTERN WATER LEADERS PRESENT**  
***THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST: ARE WE RUNNING DRY?***

*American States Water Company, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, Southern Nevada Water Authority, and Vegas PBS announce a groundbreaking collaboration about the American Southwest's water crisis*

*The hour-long special, narrated by Jane Seymour, premieres on PBS stations in the Southwest in September, 2008*

Nearly every state in the American Southwest is affected by a water crisis and is struggling with record dry conditions. On the heels of the American Southwest's drought, and in an effort to raise awareness, The Chronicles Group with support from grants from the American States Water Company, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, the Southern Nevada Water Authority and other public and private entities, Vegas PBS will present *The American Southwest: Are We Running Dry?* directed, written, and produced by Jim Thebaut, president of The Chronicles Group, a Los Angeles based non-profit public information/education film production company.

Featuring narration from Emmy® Award-winning actress Jane Seymour, *The American Southwest: Are We Running Dry?* is a definitive look at how the water crisis affects the American Southwest states and its escalating economic toll. With no commercial interruption, the film will premiere on western PBS stations in fall 2008 and air in key cities across the American West, followed by live in-studio simulcast town hall meetings.

From the White House to the House of Representatives, Thebaut interviews key thought leaders for an intelligent and informed discussion about the evolving water crisis. Thebaut films at diverse locations including the Navajo and Hopi Indian reservations, on Capitol Hill and in

Las Vegas for an absorbing and contemplative discussion about conservation, water reuse, desalination, unprecedented population growth and future water policies. Interviews with key members of Congress include Sens. Jon Kyl (Ariz.), Ken Salazar (Colo.), and Pete Domenici and Jeff Bingaman (N.M.), and U.S. Reps. Mary Bono (Palm Springs) and Jim Costa (Fresno). An interview with Dr. Gene Whitney, science advisor to President Bush, also is featured in this impartial and balanced documentary.

*The American Southwest: Are We Running Dry?* gives audiences an in-depth awareness and education of the water crisis in the United States. Viewers will learn about land use planning and the water needs of cities in the Southwest, and how climate change may impact water levels on vital sources such as Lake Powell, Hoover Dam's Lake Mead, the Sacramento River Delta, the Rio Grande River and the Colorado River.

Pat Mulroy, who as general manager oversees operations of the Las Vegas Valley Water District, which serves more than 300,000 customers, and the Southern Nevada Water Authority, responsible for acquiring, treating and delivering water to local agencies that collectively serve 1.8 million residents and nearly 40 million annual visitors, says, "While the challenges posed by acute water shortages are becoming increasingly apparent throughout our nation and the world, we in the American Southwest have for some years now witnessed the impact of climate change as we work to stretch a limited resource to meet the needs of a growing population. With this film, Mr. Thebaut will aptly portray how we in the desert southwest are working to surmount the obstacles. Hopefully, other regions around the world can build on our experiences to confront their own water-scarcity crises."

Timothy Brick, chairman of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, says "Metropolitan is proud to be part of this important project. The challenges we face in meeting water needs of the Southwest are great, and education is the first step. This film will play a vital role in communicating the seriousness of the challenges and showing people there are solutions and we are addressing those solutions for the future. Jim Thebaut has awakened and activated a large audience about the scale of the global water problem. We are convinced that this film focusing on the Southwest will be equally significant."

Vegas PBS General Manager Tom Axtell says, "Our station is dedicated to making scientific concepts and public policy accessible to all citizens. This project is another example of

our commitment to work with community organizations to discuss these issues. We are delighted to be involved in a multi-state, multi-station project that explores the critical issue of water in the Southwest.”

The project follows on the heels of Thebaut’s groundbreaking and critically acclaimed 2005 documentary, *Running Dry*, about the global water humanitarian crisis that featured interviews with Mikhail Gorbachev, Shimon Peres and others. The documentary shed light on the fact that every 15 seconds, a child dies from the lack of water or water related diseases and that the seeds of terrorism evolve from the global humanitarian crisis.

“My last project was looked upon as a reliable source of information in the ongoing battle to educate people about the crisis. The American Southwest documentary represents a profound opportunity to educate the public and even change some minds without politicization. It’s an honor to collaborate between these public and private sectors,” says Thebaut.

Inspiration for *Running Dry* originated from the late Illinois Sen. Paul Simon’s book, *Tapped Out: The Coming World Crisis in Water and What We Can Do About It*, published in 1998. Considered by many a harbinger of things to come, the book was excerpted in *Parade Magazine* and served as a wake-up call for decision makers and the public to act in order to save vanishing groundwater reserves. Simon’s book—as well as the *Running Dry* documentary— influenced the passage of the Sen. Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act, signed into law in late 2005.

Says Simon’s wife, Patty, “When Paul retired from the Senate, he wrote about the coming world crisis in water. He knew his book would reach a limited audience in book form and wanted to reach a larger population by film. Jim Thebaut made it possible for Paul’s concerns to be noted by many. *Running Dry* takes you to places Paul had seen and more. The impact is a chilling reminder of just how precious water is and how much safe water and sanitation is threatened or non-existent in today’s world. This next film will be a vivid call to action to make water a priority issue.”

Jane Seymour, who will appear on-camera as well as narrate, says, “As in the rest of the world, significant water problems exist in the Southwest states because of severe drought, urban development, agricultural uses and population growth. The overwhelming need to solve these issues in the United States and the world is crucial through education and planning. The severity

of the American water crisis cannot be underestimated.”

Also interviewed for the American Southwest documentary is Floyd Wicks, president and CEO of American States Water Co., which provides water service to hundreds of thousands of Californians. “The recent stroke of a pen that reduced the amount of water through the state water project, coupled with the fact that Southern California just experienced the driest year ever recorded since 1887, and the reduction already experienced on the Colorado River all add up to the need for a comprehensive solution and analysis of the water supply sustainability in the American Southwest. With all these situations facing us it calls for immediate action to find new sources of supply. With everyone working together it can be done,” says Wicks.

#### **ABOUT AMERICAN STATES WATER COMPANY**

*American States Water Company provides water service to 1 out of 30 Californians located within 75 communities throughout 10 counties in Northern, Coastal, and Southern California (approximately 255,000 customers) and to over 13,000 customers in the city of Fountain Hills, Arizona, and a small portion of Scottsdale, Arizona. The Company also distributes electricity to over 23,000 customers in the Big Bear recreational area of California. Through its non-regulated subsidiary, American States Utility Services, Inc., the Company contracts with the U.S. Government and private entities to provide various services, including water marketing and operation and maintenance of water and wastewater systems. [www.aswater.com](http://www.aswater.com)*

#### **ABOUT THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

*The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is a cooperative of 26 cities and water agencies serving 18 million people in six counties. The district imports water from the Colorado River and Northern California to supplement local supplies, and helps its members to develop increased water conservation, recycling, storage, and other resource-management programs. [www.mwdh2o.com](http://www.mwdh2o.com).*

#### **ABOUT THE SOUTHERN NEVADA WATER AUTHORITY**

*Local water providers and wastewater agents formed the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) in 1991 to address the area's unique water needs on a regional basis. The Water Authority's responsibilities include managing current water resources and ensuring Southern Nevada has enough water for the future. SNWA also maintains regional water treatment and delivery systems. The agency monitors regional water quality to ensure that area water meets or exceeds the standards of the Safe Drinking Water Act. In addition, SNWA oversees a conservation plan focused on teaching the public how to use water efficiently. [www.snwa.com](http://www.snwa.com)*

#### **ABOUT VEGAS PBS**

*Vegas PBS is dedicated to providing educational and public service media technologies for Southern Nevadans, teachers, and emergency management professionals. The station began local services in 1968. [www.vegaspbs.org](http://www.vegaspbs.org)*

#### **ABOUT THE CHRONICLES GROUP**

*The Chronicles Group, a not for profit 501C3 corporation is dedicated to providing visual and educational records for the general public viewing about profound issues facing the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The American Southwest: Are We Running Dry? documentary is just one of The Chronicles Group's projects. Other significant films include The Cold*

*War, The Dirty Little Secret, and The Iceman Tapes: Conversations with a Killer.* [www.chroniclesgroup.org](http://www.chroniclesgroup.org)

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