

Penn State Public Broadcasting

WPSU-TV WPSU-FM CREATIVE SERVICES EDUCATIONAL SERVICES MEDIA SALES

July 15, 2011

AASHE STARS Program Staff
213½ N. Limestone
Lexington, KY 40507

Dear Sir/Madam:

Penn State Public Broadcasting's *Liquid Assets: The Story of Our Water Infrastructure* is a documentary and community outreach initiative that informs the nation about US water and wastewater infrastructure and raises public awareness of water-related sustainability issues. As a public media organization licensed to a major research university, Emmy Award-winning Penn State Public Broadcasting (PSPB) first conceived *Liquid Assets* in discussions with Penn State faculty, and we produced an innovative initiative that brought together the power of media with robust outreach to inform and engage citizens. First released on October 1, 2008, *Liquid Assets* (www.liquidassets.psu.edu) continues to foster discussions all across America.

In 2009, Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-Texas, senior member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and Chairwoman of the Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee) and Representative John Boozman (R-Arkansas, ranking Republican member of the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment) requested 535 copies of *Liquid Assets* to distribute to members of Congress and the Senate in the spirit of bi-partisanship. Representative Johnson also met with President Barack Obama's Transition Team and provided the Team with copies of *Liquid Assets*.

In the first twelve-month period following its release, the documentary was telecast more than 1800 times nationwide on 95% of all public television stations (350+). It was broadcast in 100% of the top 40 markets. Furthermore, the Web site had visits from more than 140 countries.

Liquid Assets fostered partnerships among nationwide and local organizations and provide tools that enabled communities to connect around shared issues. The outreach partners—American Society of Civil Engineers (lead partner), the International City/County Management Association, the National Environmental Service Center, and Penn State's Cooperative Extension—worked with communities nationwide to hold 100's of public screenings and events sponsored by multiple community partners. State departments of environmental protection, public television stations, environmental organizations, and municipal public works collaborated on events from Denver to Kansas City to Washington, D.C. Outreach grants were awarded to nine public television stations to facilitate public engagement, and several PBS stations produced their own local documentaries inspired by *Liquid Assets*. Partners and non-profit and government agencies distributed 15,000 copies of the DVD free of charge, including to municipalities representing 80% of the U.S. population, for use in local community meetings and discussions.



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PSPB's Educational Services prepared lesson plans tied to educational standards, which continue to be distributed through WGBH's *Teachers' Domain*, an online digital learning teachers' resource with 275,000 registered users (soon to merge with *PBS LearningMedia*).

Finally, the producers of *Liquid Assets* earned the American Association of Engineering Societies' 2008 Journalism Award for outstanding reporting. Previous winners have included *Fortune Magazine*, *Chicago Tribune*, and the *Washington Post*.

Liquid Assets was our first large-scale, \$1-million public service media project, and our innovative approach to raising awareness was encouraged by the University's commitment to sustainability. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions: 814-863-5630; tzk1@psu.edu.

Sincerely,



Ted Krichels
Associate Vice President for Public Media
General Manager, Penn State Public Broadcasting