Advocating During the Election Season

The American Association of Museums’ Online Advocacy Training Series

Have no fear! We’ll explain muting, Q&A and other details when we start.
Topics

- About the Online Training Session
- Who’s Speaking?
- Welcome from American Association of Museums
- A word of caution
- Where to get started
- 10 specific techniques for museum advocates
About the Online Training Session

- What’s happening?
- Muting
- Q&A
- Recording and Follow-Up Materials
Who’s Speaking?
Welcome from American Association of Museums

Ford W. Bell, DVM
President, American Association of Museums
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Where are we Starting?

Let’s go to the polls!
Why Get Involved in the Elections?

- Raises the profile of museum issues, both during the campaign and long after.
- Offers a new and often invigorating way for museum supporters to get involved.
- Enhances your access and reach with elected officials.
- Civic mindedness: it’s an important part of democracy, and it’s a fun thing to do!
10 Specific Techniques

Let’s get started…
Make Sure You Know the Rules

- One terrific Resource: AAM’s “Museum Advocacy in an Election Year”
- Main rule: Advocacy and even Lobbying is OK. “Electioneering” (i.e., picking a preferred candidate) is not
Learn About the Candidates and Issues

- Ballot Initiatives Strategy Center: www.ballot.org
- Congress.org: www.congress.org
- Open Secrets: www.opensecrets.org
- Vote Smart: www.vote-smart.org
- Independent Sector: www.independentsector.org/election_resources
Voter Drives

- Why: Getting like minded people out to vote will only help your cause.
- Your role – Provide resources:
  - Flyers
  - Business cards
  - Online and voice mail greetings
- The role of your volunteers, visitors, and supporters: Distribute far and wide
- The message? Go to Congress.org and click on “register to vote”
Create a Candidate Survey

● Why?
  – Gets volunteers / supporters / trustees involved
  – Requires candidates to focus on museum issues

● How?
  – Zoomerang
  – SurveyMonkey

● What can you do with the information?
  – Connect advocates with candidates
  – Post responses online
  – Utilize in future advocacy efforts
Facility Rental

- Elected officials or candidates may be interested in utilizing a museum’s facilities. Here’s the scoop:
  
  “You may rent your facilities, in whole or part, to a political campaign for election activities. The principles here are *hands off* (museum officials should stay away from the event) and *evenhandedness* (rent on the same terms to everybody, political or not).”
Web 2.0 Techniques

- Set up a “Blog Day”
- Encourage “YouTube” videos from townhall meetings and campaign events
- Set up a Facebook page around your organization’s involvement in the election (don’t forget to tag all photos!)
- Use Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn
- Photosharing through Flickr or other similar sites
GOTV: Get Out the Vote

- What is it?
- Old Fashioned (but still effective!)
  - Phone lists from local Board of Elections
  - Doorbelling, Sign waving, etc.
- New Fashioned
  - E-mail / voicemail taglines
  - Twitter, Facebook, text messages
- AAM Resources
  - voter registration information
  - Webstickers
Online Petitions / Campaign Sites

- Why do a petition?
  - Engages advocates
  - May encourage additional actions

- How?
  - www.petitiononline.com

- Taking it to the next level
  - www.citizenspeak.org
More ideas…

- Develop an “each one reach one” campaign
  - Ask every museum supporter to bring at least one other person to the polls
  - Offer prizes / incentives for those that bring the most to the polls (like a “pledge” drive)

- Incorporate into your “First Friday” or “Second Saturday” events at your museum

- Museum as a Polling Place
Working the Polling Sites

- Every jurisdiction needs volunteers to work the polls
- Benefits to you: Active and engaged advocates
- Benefits to them: Enhanced understanding of the process (and perhaps more sympathy in the long run!)
What Other Resources Are Available?

- Attend Museums Advocacy Day 2011 – If you can’t attend, make sure someone from your museum or coalition does!
- Use www.speakupformuseums.org to send letters to your legislators
- Work with your AAM government relations team – they are here to help.
Final Questions or Comments?

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