Educating Elected Officials – Practical Exercise

For this role-playing exercise, gather members of your staff and split up into teams of three. You will develop a brief “speech” you can use with your potential donors and with elected officials explaining quickly and succinctly why your collections matter to your community. Practicing this “speech” in advance will give you more confidence to speak on behalf of your institution.

Instructions
1. Give each team 10 minutes to discuss and prepare a one-minute speech about why someone should care about their institution’s collections. Then have each team select a presenter.

2. With stopwatch in hand, have each team’s presenter give their one-minute speech to the other teams.

3. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the presentations you heard. What would strengthen the one-minute presentations? Ask those who did not present how they might say something differently.

Samples
The sample ideas below were compiled from participants in Florida Connecting to Collections (C2C) program who developed their educating elected official’s speech:

- Historic sites promote quality of life and community identity (with an example from your organization).
- All types of cultural institutions hold a unique place in our communities by contributing not only culturally, but economically and socially as well (with an example from your organization).
- The outreach activities we offer in our towns and cities are for everyone; they help build a sense of community among social groups who might not otherwise come in contact with each other (with an example from your organization).
- We are an amazing resource for students—study after study shows that students develop self-confidence, empathy, and other skills that prepare them for learning and motivate them to stay in school (with an example from your organization).
- Our local economy depends on tourism. Visitors may come for the beaches, but they come back because there is so much more than beaches in our town (with an example from your organization).