

10 Minute Supervisor Trainings



January 2021

Elevator Pitches

What Is an “Elevator Pitch” and Why Do You Need One?

“Before anything else, preparation is the key to success.”-Alexander Graham Bell

Being a conservation district supervisor, you might have been asked questions about conservation districts or conservation practices in your community. Sometimes when we are asked questions, we might feel challenged or tested. One of the reasons for this may be because we are not prepared to answer these questions. Moments or opportunities like these are a good time to have an “elevator pitch” prepared. In this training we will learn what an elevator pitch is, why you need to have an elevator pitch, and how to go about creating one.

What is an elevator pitch? An “elevator pitch” is a very short speech or statement that you would give in an attempt to sway the listener to want more information. The idea is to be able to make the pitch in the amount of time it would take for a brief elevator ride. This is not a long drawn-out presentation about all the good things that the conservation district is doing, has done, or will do in the future. An elevator pitch is a very brief, prepared presentation. Your elevator pitch should last about a minute and should be interesting, simple and focused.

Why do you need an elevator pitch? Hopefully, you or someone from your board of supervisors annually reaches out to at least one fiscal court member to discuss the conservation district’s programs (this is one of the District In Good Standing requirements). When you first approach a fiscal court member, time may be of the essence, so a very brief presentation or elevator pitch may be what is needed to get your foot in the door to schedule a meeting.

There are at least two groups that you would need an elevator pitch for in the conservation world. The first is legislators on the federal, state, or local level concerning programmatic or funding issues. You might need to explain how the conservation district utilizes the millage tax revenue or general fund dollars that they receive. The second group would be landowners and/or producers who may need encouragement to adopt conservation practices that will conserve and preserve the natural resources.

The information that is included in your elevator pitch could vary depending on the person or audience that you are pitching to. For example, the producer that you are encouraging to adopt a best management practice won't need information about where the district derives their operating funds and how the funds are utilized. He or she may however be interested in the cost share programs offered by the conservation district and the availability and profitability of those programs.

How to create an elevator pitch? So far, we have discussed what an elevator pitch is and why you might need to have one prepared. Now let's talk about the process of creating an elevator pitch. First, you need to address who you are. Make sure that you include your name and your organization. This will be helpful for the person you are pitching to. Second, tell what your organization does. This could be the hardest part of the whole pitch because you will need to tell this in just a few words. Spend some time considering the mission of the conservation district. Think about the current operations of the conservation district as well as the goals and aspirations that you have for it. Next, you will need to make the listener understand how this information relates to them. At this point you want them to see how this benefits them and/or their mission. Finally, you need to address what it is that you want from the pitch. This might be requesting a few minutes to discuss conservation issues, a spot on the agenda of a fiscal court meeting, conservation program assistance, increased funding, or better use of conservation best management practices, to name a few. Once you have written your elevator pitch you should practice and memorize it. Always remember that what you do is important!

Now that you're ready to create your own elevator pitch, please watch this video for more information: <https://youtu.be/fw9ZprW3vc0>