



Level Up Your Advocacy: A Video-Game Guide for Community Leaders

From Reactive to Proactive: Building Relationships with Legislators

Press Start

Advocacy is more than testifying at the Capitol. It also means inviting legislators into Bondurant's world so they can see growth, roads, new housing, school challenges, businesses, and services up close. Advocacy is not something that only happens at the Capitol - it's something we can do every day at home.

EVERYDAY PLAY: The strongest advocacy brings the community to life before a vote is ever taken.

Level 1: Know the Objective: Why Advocacy Matters

Winning means helping legislators understand how their decisions affect our communities.

- If we do not tell our story, someone else may write the rules without understanding the local terrain.
- Translate policy into what it means for roads, projects, budgets, staffing, development, services, and taxpayers.
- Invite decision-makers to see the real-world conditions behind the numbers. Stories and places make policy memorable.

In Bondurant, the city's population doubled in 10 years. Explaining rapid growth is more powerful when legislators can see the traffic, development, housing, schools, and infrastructure demands themselves.

Power-Ups: Four Habits That Make Advocacy Stronger

Power-up	How to play
Be Clear One issue. One direct ask.	Focus on one issue and one specific ask. Digital public notices are a useful example: make the need and the requested change easy to understand.
Be Concise Respect their time. Issue + impact + ask.	Use an elevator pitch covering the issue, impact, and solution or ask: "Bondurant's population doubled in 10 years, and laws written for small towns no longer fit."
Be Credible Facts + examples are your currency.	Bring facts, data, and real examples: budget numbers, resident feedback, growth and permit data, cost comparisons, and service-impact stories.
Be Consistent Keep showing up - not only in a crisis.	Engage year-round, not only when a crisis needs attention.

World 1-1: Invite Legislators Into Your Community

Reach out before session. Learn who represents your community and how they prefer to communicate. Introduce yourself, share the community's story, and invite legislators for a tour or coffee.

WARP PIPES: Invitations are “warp pipes” into the community.

- **Show the map:** Business park, school expansion, Highway 65 traffic, bike trail, local coffee shop, and brewery.
- **Use existing touchpoints:** Legislators Unfiltered, East Polk Legislative Breakfast, Developer's Conference, Chamber and community events, groundbreakings, ribbon cuttings, annual dinner, and After Hours: TIF Talk.
- **Keep the connection going:** Take photos, share them, and follow up. A thank-you, promised information, an update or a tagged photo goes a long way.

Collect the Coins: Facts and Stories

COIN COUNT: About 200 housing permits means about 200 more families using roads, parks, and schools.

Stories stick more than statistics, while accurate local data builds trust.

Use the numbers to show scale, then connect them to a resident, project, service, or everyday experience.

Case Study: Legislators Unfiltered - Create Your Own Table

EXTRA LIVES: We stopped waiting for the perfect opportunity to talk with legislators and create one.

- Bring legislators, local officials, staff, business leaders, and community partners together for candid, practical conversation.
- Keep it informative, not partisan. Focus on how state decisions play out locally and build relationships before the next legislative “ask.”
- Showcase the community while you advocate - local businesses, facilities, and projects become part of the story legislators remember.

Player Feedback

WHAT LEGISLATORS REMEMBER

“You always have good snacks.”

“Your meetings are well run and informational.”

“You’re always direct and keep us informed on what you need—you actually ask.”

Welcoming local businesses, organized meetings, direct asks, and follow-through build familiarity and trust. Small details matter.

Boss Battle: Legislative Session - Preparation Pays Off

Preparation pays off when relationships and credibility are already built.

- **Bring:** One-page handouts, simple charts, real-world examples, and a clear message.
- **Respect:** Legislators' time.
- **Close the loop:** Thank them for their time and support. Each contact adds another "coin" to your credibility meter.

LEVEL-UP MESSAGE: "Public notice uniformity makes it less confusing for cities and residents."

Bonus Levels: Advocacy Beyond the Capitol

Advocacy continues year-round.

- League Day on the Hill
- Success stories about awards, openings, and community wins.
- Testimony and feedback with short real-world input.
- Advocacy committees and alliances through IMFOA, the League, and regional efforts.

Bondurant Touchpoints	Why They Matter
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legislators Unfiltered• East Polk Legislative Breakfast• Developer's Conference• Groundbreakings + Ribbon Cuttings• Annual Dinner / Chamber Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legislators see the community firsthand• Conversation happens outside session pressure• Local examples become memorable• Relationships become personal, not transactional• You stay connected when you are not asking

Game Rules

DO	DON'T	BONUS RULE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use facts and stories• Work with allies• Stay respectful and professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Burn bridges• Overload with detail• Assume one conversation is enough	Save your progress by tracking conversations and follow-ups.

Player 1: Final Takeaway

YOU HOLD THE CONTROLLER.

There is no cheat code or auto-play mode. Community leaders hold the controller: decide when to jump in, connect, and keep leveling up.

You do not need to be a lobbyist; show up, tell your story, and follow through.

Start before session. Share one story. Build relationships. Celebrate wins. Keep leveling up.

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