

DLBA BOARD MEMBERS ENCOURAGE DOWNTOWN STAKEHOLDERS TO GET INVOLVED

This is the first in a series of introductions to members of the DLBA Board of Directors. The diverse DLBA Board is comprised of Downtown stakeholders who share an interest and an influence in the give-and-take between the business community and the City.

Stakeholders with a wish to become involved with the Board and help drive positive change in the Downtown have a ready path available; Sign up to receive the DLBA Newsletter, start attending the open-to-the-public DLBA programming committee meetings, determine what interests you, and fill out an application.

Here are our DLBA Board profiles for this month:

DEBRA FIXEN



Debra Fixen serves on the Executive Committee of the DLBA Board and is General Manager of Shoreline Village. Sales at the picturesque Downtown Waterfront property have gone up steadily on her watch.

“The owners trust me immensely to represent them in the public,” said Fixen. “I get the chance to not only manage this great property but also to go out into the community, market the property, be involved in the community and really set Shoreline Village as a community partner.”

Originally from Ohio, Fixen graduated from the University of Maryland after majoring in sociology with a minor in business management.

“Unknown to me at the time,” Fixen said, “it set me up for exactly what I ended up doing with my career.”

After working a property management job centered in Long Beach that demanded huge driving mileage, Fixen was pleased to land a position at one prime location. She helps the Shoreline Village businesses thrive and also involves local non-profits with the many events happening at the Downtown Waterfront throughout the year.

“Being on the DLBA board has helped me understand different players in the City, how things work, who to talk to for getting things done, what’s coming up, and what kind of programs I can bring back to my merchants,” said Fixen.

“Serving on the Board gives you the opportunity first-hand to see business as it’s unfolding,” Fixen added. “DLBA is there to support the interest of the businesses, but we’re also aware of the fact that it has to make sense to the elected officials and their constituents.”

SILVANO MERLO



Silvano Merlo, General Manager of the Courtyard Marriott in Downtown Long Beach, brings a world of experience to his position as Chairperson of the DLBA Board; His resume in the hospitality industry includes stints throughout Europe, the Caribbean, and South America.

Merlo was born and raised in Veglio, a tiny town in northern

Italy. He commenced his far-flung career after graduating from a culinary school near Veglio and realizing that the hospitality industry could provide him with a career and great traveling experience.

He arrived in the States in 1987, joined the Marriott Corporation two years later and has been with them ever since.

Merlo has served on the DLBA Board since 2014.

“I can contribute to the Board some acumen from a corporate standpoint about how businesses run, while I’m gaining the understanding of how a city is run,” said Merlo. “I think I got to Long Beach at the right time when there was the beginning of a renaissance in this city.”

“I’m a firm believer that if you want to see change you need to help in that process,” Merlo continued. “Put forth your work, your opinion, your commitment. That’s what creates a new sense of purpose for a city.”

[apply now](#)