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**COMMUNITY LEADERS TO BE RECOGNIZED FOR
CONTRIBUTIONS, FUTURE VISIONS AT CELEBRATE DOWNTOWN**

Spirit of Downtown Awards to be handed to Vice Mayor Suja Lowenthal, Resident Don Darnauer, and Julia Huang of interTrend Communications.

LONG BEACH, Calif. (January 20, 2016) – Four years ago, the Downtown Long Beach Associates (DLBA) created the Spirit of Downtown Awards at its inaugural Celebrate Downtown event, and honored posthumously four individuals that the Long Beach community had sadly lost in 2012: Shaun Lumachi, founder of the *Long Beach Post*; Larry Allison, long-respected Editor of the *Press-Telegram*; Bill Baker, a famed volunteer and redevelopment master; and Mark Bixby, DLBA Director and Long Beach’s bicycling guru who largely headed the creation of our City’s massive biking infrastructure and culture.

This year’s event, to be held at the Pike Outlets on Thursday, February 25 from 5PM to 9PM, continues that tradition by honoring members and organizations of our community, each of whom have accomplished incredible achievements in the past and perpetually look ahead toward a more promising future.

Honorees include Don Darnauer, a resident of Pine Avenue since 1991, 30-year US Coast Guard veteran, and overall champion for DTLB as well as Julia Huang, interTrend Communications founder and one of the leading reasons that the influential artist collective Pow! Wow! Was brought to Long Beach.

Topping out the honorees with a special presentation will be Vice Mayor Suja Lowenthal, who has been serving the 2nd Council District and DTLB for a decade and ends her term in June. Lowenthal’s influence has altered the landscape of DTLB and Long Beach as a whole, from cementing our city’s biking culture as among the most respected in the nation to spearheading the new Civic Center project.

“Each of these individuals has brought forth significant shifts in the culture of our Downtown,” said Kraig Kojian, President and CEO of the DLBA. “In a sense, each have been part of a defining era of Downtown’s progress: from watching it grow out into the new millennium, to seeing it become a political force to be reckoned with, to watching artists understand its place as a cultural mecca. The contributions that Don, Julia and the Vice Mayor have made are essential cogs in making Downtown Long Beach what it is and what its future holds.”

Celebrate Downtown 2016 will feature DTLB’s own Auld Dubliner, who will provide beverages including craft beer and wine; Famous Dave’s BBQ will allow guests to grub down on delicious food; and live music featuring bands from the DLBA’s Live After 5 series, to be announced.

The event is free, but space is limited and an RSVP is required. The Pike Outlets is located at 95 South Pine in DTLB. Please email info@dlba.org or call 562-436-4259.

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About the DLBA: The Downtown Long Beach Associates is a non-profit organization operating on behalf of the property owners and tenants of the Business Improvement District. It is dedicated to the management, marketing, security, maintenance, advocacy, and economic and community development of the assessment districts in cooperation with the City of Long Beach and the private sector. For additional information, please see www.downtownlongbeach.org.