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SEAFOOD SALES REMAIN STEADY

New Year's Eve staples stable; king crab leg price skyrockets



Wyatt Cooper works behind counter at the outdoor seafood market at Cooper's Seafood House in Scranton on Tuesday. PHOTOS BY SEAN MCKEAG/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

By Robert Tomkavage RTOMKAVAGE@ SCRANTONTIMES.COM

Shrimp and scallops remain in demand as shoppers splurge on seafood tor New Year's Eve celebrations.

"This year, the staples are shrimp and lobster tails," said Jim Nixon, vice president and general manager of Valley Seafood on North Washington Street in Wilkes-Barre. "Besides the warm-water lobsters, we carry three different types of cold-water lobster tails — African, Canadian and Australian. They're a big, big mover down here, along with scallops and haddock."

Nixon noted the prices of many seafood favorites remained stable since last year with one significant outlier.

"The biggest hassle this year is the price of king crab legs," he said. "They're a lot higher than normal - probably double the price. This year, I believe they're like \$70 a pound."

Several factors contributed to the substantial increase in the cost of crab legs, Nixon said.

'It's a little bit of everything ... from tariffs to different countries not selling them, to limits on how much they can fish the waters," he said. "They're not as plentiful as normal this year."

Jack Cooper, co-owner of Cooper's Seafood House on North Washing-



Shrimp is for sale at the outdoor seafood market at Cooper's Seafood House in Scranton on Tuesday.

customers continue to purchase Alaskan king crab despite the elevated prices.

"It's more expensive, but it's still selling," Cooper said. "It sold much more than I ever thought for Christmas Eve. People wanted it so we got it again for New Year's Eve, and people are still calling and asking about it. They're not overly worried about the price; they want quality."

Cooper's sells a 10-pound box with

ton Avenue in Scranton, stressed that six to nine king crab legs for \$90 a pound about double the price from last year, Cooper said.

"The profit margin is very small," he said. "I'm doing it as a convenience for our customers.

The Russian embargo drastically drove up king crab prices, Cooper said. "The Russians fish most of the crab, and the American industry was almost

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POLICE: SUSPECT WEAPONS CACHE

Authorities say rape suspect possessed weapons of mass destruction, machine gun

By Bob Kalinowski

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During a manhunt in September for a rape suspect from Ross Twp., state police discovered a cache of pipe bombs, grenades and other weapons, including a machine gun, according to charges filed.

Ryan McDermott, 40, is now facing charges of possession of weapons of mass destruction and related crimes.



McDermott

he raped and impregnated a 17-year-old girl who he supplied with alcohol and marijuana in local hotels. In that case, he is charged with rape, rape of an impaired

in September on allegations

person, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, sexual assault, unlawful restraint, recording child sex acts, possessing and disseminating images depicting child sexual abuse, corruption of a

While awaiting a preliminary hearing in that case, state police on Monday charged

minor and criminal use of a communication

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CRESTWOOD

New-look board adds another new member

By Christopher Doyle

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WRIGHT TWP. — To find its sixth new school board member in three months, Crestwood is turning to a leader at a neighboring school district.

The Crestwood Board of Education appointed Patrick Patte III, an assistant to the superintendent at Hazleton Area School District, to its vacant board seat at a special meeting Monday night. The vote for Patte was unanimous among all eight remaining members of the school board. Contacted Tuesday afternoon, Patte said said his priority on the school board would be "to give the students of the district the best opportunities possible."

"Whether it's academically or facility-wise, (my priority) is to make sure they have great opportunities and that we provide them the

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Where are the wackiest New Year's Eve drops in the US?

By John Seewer **ASSOCIATED PRESS**

have all the fun with its Times Square ball drop on New Year's

Dozens of places across the U.S. will ring in 2026 by dropping a quirky assortment of fruits, vegetables, sea creatures and balls of all shapes and sizes.

Many have a hometown flair. There's the giant cheese wedge in Plymouth, Wisconsin, a chile pepper in Las Cruces, New Mexico, a pinecone in Flagstaff, Arizona, and millennium.

a conch shell in Key West, Flor- FRUITY TRADITIONS ida.

Pennsylvania is home to a Why let New York City bonanza of bizarre New Year's Eve events — the bologna drop in Lebanon, the pickle drop in Dillsburg and the potato chip drop in Lewistown.

It's a New Year's tradition that goes back to 1907 when a 700-pound ball measuring five feet in diameter debuted

in Times Square. Copycat celebrations have surged coast to coast over the past few decades and around the beginning of the new

ON NEW YEAR'S EVE It's said in some cultures that eating fruit on New Year's Eve brings luck and wealth. Perhaps that's why many cities mix fruit into their celebrations. Miami has its "Big Orange" drop, while Sarasota, Florida, features a pineapple. There are cherry drops in Milwaukie, Oregon, and Traverse City, Michigan. Brightly lit grapes plunge from above in Temecula, California. Atlanta this year is replacing its peach drop with a "digital drone peach in the sky."

BEACH BALLS AND FLIP-FLOPS

It's tough to beat ringing in the year while watching a pair of sparkly flip-flops diving into Folly Beach, South Carolina. In Panama City Beach, Florida, there's an evening-long bash where 15,000 beach balls are dropped above revelers just hours before a giant beach ball descends a tower at midnight.

MOONPIES AND A GIANT PEEP

What could be better than

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The PEEPS® Chick rings in the new year at the 7th annual PEEPSFEST® at SteelStacks on Dec. 31, 2015, in Bethlehem, Pa. (JEFF FUSCO/AP IMAGES FOR JUST **BORN QUALITY CONFECTIONS)**

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