

Fourth Of July Fireworks In Shorter Supply This Year, But Captain Jim's Continues Tradition With Its Network, Early Orders

by Chris Rhodes, Reporter
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WEST ALTON - Some may not know it, but there is a shortage of fireworks supplies this year because nationwide ports are backed up. A percentage of fireworks have to be tested before they come into the U.S., and it is taking much longer for ports to move fireworks through to suppliers and then distributors.

Captain Jim's Fireworks across the Mississippi River off U.S. 67 in West Alton is extremely busy this year, as always, but manager Kinzie Carter said thankfully they are "fully stocked," because of owners Jim and Erica Meyers working ahead and their contacts. Jim's grandmother opened the operation in 1947, and his father continued it. When he died in 2005, Jim took over, and it has continued to expand.

The Meyers family operates the fireworks stand year-round, and Jim said he started to order supplies for the Fourth of July in March. He said his company's long-time relationship with suppliers also makes a big difference.

"We have used the same distributor since 1978, and we have some preferential treatment because of that," he said. "The smaller spenders and smaller places that sell fireworks won't have as many products. I have a friend in St. Charles, Mo., who has a tent, and he received 30 percent of what he ordered. He will probably be sold out by July 1. The ports are having a hard time finding workers which have backed up supplies."

Kinzie says, as always, it has been "pretty busy," and that people are excited to celebrate the Fourth of July now that the COVID-19 Pandemic has settled down some. She said mortar reloadable fireworks are very popular again this year, and the black cat firecrackers are also a hot item.

Erica Meyers said the business has been interesting since the 2019 flooding, and last year's COVID Pandemic, and this year's shortage. She hopes that next year things will get back to normal for the annual celebration of America's independence and fireworks distribution.

Jim and Erica said the past three years they have just adapted, used their business expertise and network, and it still has worked out well for the customers and the business.

[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)