

Beat: Miscellaneous

Samoa and Kiribati islands first to welcome the new year

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USPA News - Samoa and parts of the island nation of Kiribati, which are located in the central tropical Pacific Ocean, were the first places in the world to welcome the new year on Tuesday. Auckland in New Zealand will be the world's first major city to mark 2013. Residents and tourists on Kiritimati, which is better known as Christmas Island and has a population of more than 5,500, were among the first to ring in the new year.

Other parts of Kiribati's Line Islands also saw the date on the calendar change from December 31 to January 1, although they have no official population. For the second time, residents in Samoa were also among the first people in the world to welcome the new year. The island country changed its timezone at the end of December 2011 by moving to the west of the International Date Line in an effort to boost its economy by doing business with Australia and New Zealand. Samoa and parts of Kiribati are now both in the world's farthest forward timezone, which is 14 hours ahead of UTC, and puts them at the same time as Hawaii although the date is one day ahead. Fifteen minutes later, at 1015 GMT on Monday, New Zealand's Chatham Islands and its 600 residents also rang in the new year. Along with places such as Fiji, Tonga and Antarctica, Auckland in New Zealand will be the world's first major city to mark 2013 at 1100 GMT. It will be followed at 1300 GMT by new year's celebrations in Australia with a spectacular fireworks display over the famous Harbour Bridge and Opera House in Sydney.

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