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BATTLE CREEK

ENQUIRER



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Coming home to roost

Woman reunited with most of her chickens after lengthy legal battle

Ken Palmer
Lansing State Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Belinda Fitzpatrick loved her chickens. They were more than pets or companions. They helped with her anxiety and depression and functioned as medical support animals, of sorts.

And the day in September 2021 when Ingham County Animal Control removed all 27 of them from her Lansing properties as part of a neglect investigation ranks as one of her darkest days, she said.

Even so, Fitzpatrick wasn't sure how to feel after getting most of them back on Wednesday, a few days after a jury acquitted her on a felony animal cruelty charge that could have sent her to prison.

The joy of seeing her chickens again at the county animal shelter in Mason was offset by some sad news: Only 21 of the birds were still alive. And among the departed was Tap-Tap, a rooster that had the ability to awaken her if her blood sugar dropped dangerously low and sounded her monitor. She was especially close to Tap-Tap.

"Tap's not here," Fitzpatrick said after checking all of the cages arranged in a loading area, breaking into sobs as friends tried to comfort her.

It was another difficult moment in a nearly year-long battle following the seizure of Fitzpatrick's chickens from her property on South Holmes Street, a block or so away from Sparrow Hospital. The chickens — a mix of hens and roosters — had lived both inside and outside of two houses she owns. Some were kept in cages. Some were allowed outside during the day, but kept inside at night.

"I feel numb, I don't feel angry," she said Wednesday afternoon after bringing her reclaimed chickens to a relative's farm outside of Lansing.

"I just want to see the process improved — pre-deprivation due process. They need to have a vet look before they take someone's animals. Hopefully, we can improve the process. It's not going to do any good for me to hate anybody. (But they shouldn't) traumatize people like this. I'm traumatized. I'm just cop-

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Belinda Fitzpatrick carries a chicken outside the Ingham County Animal Control building. KEN PALMER/LANSING STATE JOURNAL

"I just want to see the process improved — pre-deprivation due process. They need to have a vet look before they take someone's animals. Hopefully, we can improve the process."

Belinda Fitzpatrick

Roads to be closed for sewer work and storm cleanup

Greyson Steele
Battle Creek Enquirer
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

BATTLE CREEK — A sanitary sewer project will briefly limit toilet use for some residents in the Old Lakeview neighborhood beginning Tuesday.

Crews will add a lining to a large sanitary sewer pipe that has been deteriorating from the inside due to naturally occurring hydrogen sulfide gas, according to a release. The lining will protect the concrete pipe and restore the main to its original thickness, adding at least 70 years to the life of the sewer main.

Neighboring residents will receive door hangers 24 hours ahead of work on their streets. Limiting toilet usage for about 24 hours after work is completed will allow the lining adhesive to set, city officials said.

"Toilet use should be OK (if not excessive), but all other uses, such as clothes and dish washing should be delayed, and bathing should be minimal," city Communications Manager Jessica Vanderkolk explained. "Folks will know if they hit the threshold, when flushing and draining is no longer happening."

"It certainly can be inconvenient, but thankfully it is only temporary while we improve the pipe," she said.

The project will begin at Wentworth and Foster avenues, move to Foster and Orleans avenues, to Orleans and Capital Avenue SW, to Capital SW and Grandview Court and finish at Grandview and Grand Boulevard.

A brief detour is expected later this month as work crosses Capital SW. The city plans to share specific details about the detour as the work gets closer.

Battle Creek Transit will also plan detours for the 2W Columbia-Territorial and 4S SW Capital bus routes as the project progresses, especially

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Michigan football

Harbaugh discusses team's two-quarterback situation. Sports, 1B

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

THE BATTLE CREEK AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY (BCATS) HEREBY GIVES NOTICE of opportunity for public involvement in the 2nd amendment to its Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for fiscal years (FYs) 2023-2026 (10/1/22-9/30/26), consisting of the following proposed actions: **1)** Increasing the total construction (CON) phase budget of the City of Battle Creek's FY23 Capital Ave mill & resurface with ADA ramp upgrades, by 53.7% to \$1,770,000. The increase reflects the new inclusion of the section from Fairfield to Weeks, establishing the project limits as the contiguous segment of Capital Ave from Rebecca Rd northward to VanBuren St, as well as general inflated costs. Total Federal Surface Transportation Program \$895,547; total City of Battle Creek \$874,453; and **2)** Increasing the total CON budget of the Michigan Dept of Transportation's FY23 bridge rehabilitation at M-96 (Columbia Ave) over 1-194/M-66, by 31.7% to \$3,498,460. The increase is mainly due to underestimate of original budget, increase in unit prices, bringing up to standard the ramp terminals, additional work to improve superelevation and cross slope, and crown adjustment. Total Fed Interstate Maintenance & Fed Surface Transportation Program \$3,138,822; total State of Michigan Betterment "BM" funds \$329,821; total City of BC \$96,057. Further details of the above listed changes, and other projects in the TIP, can be provided upon request and may also be found online at www.bcatsmpo.org. Public comment on this TIP amendment is encouraged (and preferred) by e-mail to bcats@bcatsmpo.org, or within the BCATS public meetings in September (Technical Committee 9/14/22 and Policy Committee 9/28/22); call ahead or check BCATS' home page at www.bcatsmpo.org for details on attending and participating in those meetings. Comments will be accepted thru Policy Committee action on September 28th. Direct questions and/or comments to: BCATS, 601 Avenue A, Springfield, MI 49037; phone 269/963-1158, fax 269/963-4951, e-mail bcats@bcatsmpo.org.

USA TODAY
US intelligence filings say Moscow looking to purchase rockets from North Korea. 5A

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