

Hens pose fewer problems than dogs or cats

Supporter states her case for fresh eggs at SACPA

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Many Albertans take pride in growing their own vegetables, whether in the backyard or in community gardens. Many also enjoy fresh eggs from their own chickens.

Lethbridge residents may soon have that option as well, following successful initiatives in Red Deer and Edmonton.

A pilot project here, limiting households to four hens, is being considered. After hearing last fall about successful introductions in other cities, Lethbridge City Council is expected to deliberate on the issue this spring.

Egg-laying hens pose fewer problems than dogs or cats, participants at the Southern Alberta Council on Public Affairs were informed. Not only are they far quieter — no roosters allowed! — but they don't leave droppings on the neighbour's lawns.

With little more than daily maintenance, proponent Kelti Baird explained, hens may remain healthy year-round and continue to produce



Herald photo by Ian Martens

Backyard hen proponent Kelti Baird speaks during the weekly meeting of the Southern Alberta Council on Public Affairs. @MartensHerald

eggs for a decade.

"I can't grow plants to save my life," she reported, and her yard is too small for rows of vegetables.

"But I'm good with animals," Baird said, and she's learned about poultry from southern Alberta town residents and farmers.

It wasn't until the 1950s — when

supermarket competition arrived in Lethbridge — that the city banned "livestock" in residential areas. While that included cows, horses and chickens, she noted, for some reason it allowed "racing pigeons."

In New York City, she reported, chickens have never been banned. And three of the five boroughs still allow

roosters, despite their early-morning vocals.

Raising chickens, with or without roosters, remains common in many smaller communities.

"It's surprisingly easy to keep the flock healthy," Baird said.

For most of the year, she added, a flock of four would produce an average of 20 eggs per week.

As Canadians realize how dependent they've become on the global food network — with much of Alberta's beef processed by a Brazilian conglomerate, for example — Baird said they're seeing the importance of the "buy local" and "grow-it-yourself" movements.

Suitable winter-proof chicken enclosures are being sold in Lethbridge, she added, and some families are using them without disturbing any neighbours. The proposed pilot project would call for a city permit and inspection, owner education, a limit of four hens, and an initial cap on the number of permits issued.

City officials also planned to survey residents' views on the pilot project, she said. But Baird was not aware of when or how that would be done.

As an added bonus, the hens could help reduce the amount of kitchen scraps going into recycling bins. Think of them as "tiny dinosaurs," Baird suggested.

"They'll eat anything."

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Conditional sentence for man who sold drugs to undercover cop

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Selling cocaine to an undercover cop these days almost guarantees a stint in jail, but nine years ago that wasn't necessarily the case, as Sean Thomas Archibald was grateful to learn.

Had the 39-year-old former Lethbridge man sold cocaine to an undercover police officer after 2012, he likely would have received a jail sentence. But because the law was a little different in 2010, Archibald was granted a conditional sentence order, which allows accused with certain offences to serve their time in the community.

Archibald pleaded guilty Thursday in Lethbridge provincial court to three counts of drug trafficking, stemming from incidents in May 2010 in which he sold an undercover officer cocaine on three occasions. During each of the first two drug transactions, Archibald sold 27 grams of cocaine for \$100 each, followed by a third deal in which he sold the officer 25 grams for \$80.

Each time the undercover cop phoned a number and arranged to meet with a drug dealer.

After Archibald was charged and released, he disappeared but was finally brought to Lethbridge from B.C. where he has been living.

"Obviously this matter went to warrant some time ago," federal Crown prosecutor John Oman explained.

Oman said Archibald is eligible for a conditional sentence given the date of the offences, and he recommended a term of 18 months, the first nine months of which he must obey a curfew from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. every day.

Lethbridge lawyer Shaun Leochko told court his client has not been in trouble with the law since 2010, and has been working in B.C. as a drywaller.

"He did have an addiction at the time of this offence," Leochko said, adding he hasn't used cocaine for the past six years.

Archibald also pleaded guilty to one count of failing to attend court, for which he received a fine.

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Two charged with auto theft

LETHBRIDGE HERALD

Lethbridge Police have charged two men in connection with the theft of a vehicle, after an officer located a stolen truck with the alleged pair inside.

On Wednesday, an LPS officer was patrolling the northside and observed a Ford F-150, with two occupants, that was illegally parked on 21 St. N. The rear console window had been smashed and a piece of cardboard was in its place, police say.

Upon querying the license plate, it was determined the vehicle had been reported stolen on Jan. 26. Police say the men exited the vehicle and were subsequently arrested without incident.

Rodney Kesley Bottle, 36, of Cardston and Renee Star Oka, 24, of Lethbridge, are both charged with possession of stolen property over \$5,000. Both were scheduled to appear in court Thursday.

During the past two days, police also recovered two other stolen vehicles. In one case, police say the vehicle was stolen when it was left unattended while it was running to warm up. In the other, police say the thief used a spare key that had been stored in the centre console.

In both instances the vehicles were left unlocked.

Police are once again reminding all motorists — particularly during the current cold snap — to never leave a running vehicle unlocked or unattended for any amount of time. Further, never store spare keys inside.



Herald photo by Ian Martens

Lethbridge United Services Institute president Glenn Miller and local artist Don Toney look at a scale maquette of a First World War field gun and carriage proposed for a quarter life size bronze monument to be displayed at Exhibition Park.

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Fundraising begins for sculpture to honour Lethbridge's military history

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A proposed bronze sculpture paying tribute to Lethbridge's military history to be permanently housed at Exhibition Park has local supporters excited.

The sculpture by local artist Don Toney depicts a First World War artillery unit from Lethbridge mounted on a team of six horses pulling an 18-pounder field gun and carriage into battle. Organizers used Thursday's unveiling of a quarter-scale plastic model in the Exhibition's Saddle Room as the unofficial kickoff for its fundraising drive that will go from now until Veterans Week in November.

The estimated cost to produce the 12-foot-long and four-foot-high sculpture in bronze is \$200,000. Once the money is raised, the organizers

estimate it will likely take a year to complete.

Lethbridge United Services Institute president Glenn Miller explained Lethbridge as a city has a strong historical connection with the Canadian artillery which continues to this day, and this was the reason behind the choice of the subject matter for the proposed sculpture.

"This statue is a tribute to all veterans," stated Miller, "but the theme chosen is that connection with the city being artillery. This project is the means for us to have that visual reminder and education tool."

"Horses also played a vital role in the contribution and success of World War I," Miller added; especially in connection with the Exhibition and the nearby ranching community.

Exhibition Park CEO Rudy Friesen said his organization is honoured to be chosen to receive the sculpture once it is completed.

"It's a great remembrance for the

community, and it is great piece of history for Exhibition Park," stated Friesen. "We have been on this location since 1910, and this property played a significant part in both World Wars. It is nice to recognize with a statue this history at this location."

Evelyn Leffingwell, whose father-in-law served in both World Wars and whose brothers are both veterans, came out on Thursday to lend her support.

"I think (the sculpture) is absolutely gorgeous," she said. "I hope more people get to know just what went on in the war through this work."

Those wishing to donate to help bring the sculpture to Exhibition Park can do so by making their donations payable through Lethbridge County. The County will issue a tax receipt for all contributors. The quarter-scale model will be housed at Exhibition Park until November for anyone who wants to view it.

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Sex assault preliminary hearing set for massage therapist

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A 53-year-old massage therapist accused of inappropriately touching a client last November is preparing for a preliminary hearing later this summer.

Cyprian Mudenge, who has elected to be tried by a Court of Queen's Bench judge without a jury, will have the

hearing July 2 in Lethbridge provincial court.

A preliminary hearing, also called a preliminary inquiry, is generally held to determine if there is enough evidence to warrant a trial. The hearing, which is expected to take about six hours, was scheduled Thursday following a brief hearing, during which an agent for the accused's lawyer appeared in court.

Mudenge is charged with one count of sexual assault. He was not required to attend court Thursday,

On Nov. 28 of last year, a 34-year-old woman told police she had been sexually assaulted during a massage earlier in the day. Police reported that the allegations involve inappropriate touching.

Police reported Mudenge had been dismissed from his job, and at the time there was no evidence to indicate there was more than one victim. A publication ban prohibits issuing any information that could identify the complainant.