

Southwest Montana Veterans Home Update #60

By Mike Lawson

Greetings once again to you the Veterans/Communities/Counties of SW Mt who are the chief organizers and supporters of the SW MT Veterans Home.

The weather was mostly great this week and many things moved forward. Some new things got started as was expected, now that the overall construction phases are far enough along for new sub-contractors to start doing their part of this Vet Home Construction Puzzle. More will be said shortly, on that subject. The big news that we've been waiting for, for a long time, is that the Operator Contract has been signed for the operating of our SW MT Vet Home. Shaunda Hildebrand said they are coming on board ASAP. The name of this company is "Eduro" and they are the same company that operates the Copper Ridge Nursing Home here in Butte. Copper Ridge is highly rated and is considered one of the best run Nursing Homes in SW Mt. They will be introduced to the SW MT Vet Home Foundation, at their monthly meeting in August. This is a "big step" for our Vet Home and it'll be exciting to see "Eduro" getting prepared for our Resident Veterans this fall.

I did get a report from Site Superintendent Mike Ascheman and visited Carpenter General Foreman John Kotka. Liaison Mark Gollinger and I had a great walk through on Friday and as usual it was exciting to see/experience the moving of this job forward, to the eventual project completion within the next 4 plus months.

Construction update:

Community Building: Interior; Every week you can just feel the soon-to-be completion of this building. Very little painting left as the touch-up painting is getting caught up. The tile in all the bathrooms is complete and beautiful. It's comes up the wall about 6 ft, I would guess from standing next to it. The other thing happening in the bathrooms is the start of installing of the toilet partitions. That will be completed this week or next. The Door Hardware and Window Trim is done or very close. The cabinets are mostly set, and the plumbers will soon be installing fixtures in them, such as sink faucets, toilets etc... Seeing this finish work going on is excitement for sure. Exterior: Things are at a standstill with the siders working/concentrating on Cottage #2.

Cottage #1: - Interior; The sheetrock taping/mud process continues, and some sections of this building are being painted. The tile in the bathrooms is starting to be laid, which is sooner in the sequence of construction steps being done, compared to the Community Center Building. The Plumbers are installing the Boiler Control Switches/Zone Valve Controls.

Exterior; The Sheetmetal sheathing for the roof-eaves fascia covering, is starting to be put on by the siding crew. The Entryway and the Air Handler Concrete Pads were poured and finished by RK Construction.

Cottage #2; Interior; A lot of Mechanical Control work being done. The Electricians are doing the tuning-up on the electrical work, which is very technical, and the skills required are critical. Having these Electricians, who have gone through an intense four-year apprenticeship which is finished by taking a tough Electrical Certification Test administered by the State of Montana, doing this electrical work is beyond a big plus for this vet home. This is one of the "quality control processes" this construction of our Veterans Home has continued to work under from the day it began and will continue until the day it is completed. The Plumbers are continuing to do their tie-in work and putting the Boiler Control Switches/Zone Valve Controls on the zones connected to the boiler.

Exterior; The siding crew has most of the siding installed and it's looking great. The combination of the light grey (could be a very light tan?) and green is impressive. The Entry Way and Air Handler Concrete Pads were poured by RK Construction.

Cottage #3: Interior; The T-Bar Metal Framed Ceilings look to be completed and the Sprinkler Flex Heads, for the Fire Suppressant System, are being installed in these ceilings. The Sheetmetal guys and the Plumbers are continuing work on their rough-in work. The Tape/Mud operation will soon to be started.

Exterior; The Air Handler Unit Concrete Pad was poured by RK Construction. Waiting in the wings for the Siding Crew to begin the siding. With them finishing the siding on Cottage #2, it would not be surprising to see them start on Cottage #3 this week.

Cottage #4: Interior; The Mexican Sheetrock Crew are making great progress in getting the sheetrock hung in this building. It was fun to walk into this building and hear their Boom Box playing the Spanish music. These guys were very friendly, and they do top quality work. The Plumbers continue on their piping tie-ins etc... The Sheetmetal guys continue working on the, never ending, HVAC Duct and Mechanical Control installation work. The duct-insulation is ongoing. All windows, both interior and exterior are installed.

Exterior; Ready for siding.

Cottage #5: Interior; The fire painting of the trusses has been completed and inspected. The Plumbers, Sheetmetal Workers and the Electricians, are very busy getting each of their rough-in work sequences done. This is very extensive and takes time. Seeing the workmanship is awe-inspiring and a work of art. The apprentices for each trade, work hard and are learning an incredible trade-skill that will enable them to make a very good living for the rest of their working lives and have a good retirement income after that. All the exterior windows have been set and all of the exterior metal door frames have been set, except the entry-way door.

Exterior; The roofer is being held up due to the ordered D Flashing not getting here yet. Frustrating for him for sure.

Maintenance/Receiving Building: The roof trusses are rolled up into place with the plywood roof sheeting's nailed down on top of them. The Carpenter Framers are putting the 2"x10" Eave Facia on, which will be finished this week. The Interior Metal Door Frames have been installed. The exterior doors will have to wait until the 3M Vapor Barrier sheathing covers the exterior walls. The construction dry-in process is close to being done.

Elk Horn Electric Site-Work: The Electrical Gear Switches for the Electrical Vault Building have arrived on-site and are being installed. Once installed, the framers can erect this building. They poured 5 concrete columns in their Sonotube Concrete Forms for Outdoor Light Poles that will set on top of these columns.

Zemljak Site-Work; Finished installing Cement Block Retainer Wall on the south and west side of Cottage #1. It is impressive and easy to see from Blacktail Loop Road. Has more of this Retainer Wall installation to do to the north and west side of site. Leveled Entryways and Air Handler Pads, in preparation for RK Construction to do the form-work and concrete pours.

As you can see things are busy and deadlines are in the not-to-distant future. There are rumblings about getting the cement curb and site-paving started soon and completed sometime in September. We're in the last part of July so time is really moving on. Lots of construction going on in Southwest Montana and finding workers continues to be a problem, but our Vet Home Construction continues to move forward. Many thanks to the Contractors and the General Contractor, Markovich Construction, who have bent over backwards to accommodate the Veteran Community. The Tradesmen who are proud to put their name on the work they do, deserve more thanks than we can give. The Site Supervision, Architects, Engineers, State Inspectors, etc, etc, have all worked/are working together and in great harmonized ways, in making this "Southwest Montana Veteran Home" be the best in the west. Reach out to them and say a simple thank-you. With that I'll close with asking you to be safe and respect each other by following the safe guidelines that are in place for this Covid-19 pandemic. Until next time.