

Southwest Montana Veteran Home Update #109

By Mike Lawson

Greetings once again to you, the Veterans/Counties/Communities of Southwest Montana who are the chief organizers and supporters of the SW MT Veteran's Home located in Butte, Montana.

Driving by the SW MT Vet Home today was a pumped up emotional experience for me. The reason was in seeing the many trees and bushes which have been planted. This landscape planting is changing not only the looks of the grounds, but it is an act of beautification I had not anticipated. The grass sod in front of the flagpoles is an indication of what the grass will look like around the cottages. The landscaping along the Blacktail Loop roadside of the SW MT Vet Home property is also part of this landscaping. We will see a lot landscaping beauty emerge at our Vet Home site in the next few weeks. If you are in the area, drive by and see for yourself!

Seems to be a tight lid being exercised in regard to the covered walk-ways that funding was provided for in our last legislative session. Hopefully information will be forthcoming in the very near future. Efforts continue in exploring the means to eventually get an additional 6th cottage built. The other key event coming up is the Grand Opening of our Vet Home on June 29th, at 2pm in the afternoon.

This past weekend saw the Department of Montana Marine Corps League State Convention take place in Butte. It was hosted by Butte's MCL Detachment #724 and was a great success due to the hard work of this detachment's convention committee, which is made up of members/wives/others. Our Butte Spirit was alive and well and we sold our city to them, which included our WE MT Vet Home. They were amazed at it even being here and applauded the Veterans and everyone in SW Montana who made this Vet Home become a reality. It was truly a great convention! And to add a bit of humor, our NW Division Commandant who lives near Olympia, Washington, added a comment by saying that he was here for three days and had a chicken fried steak at the Hanging Five each of those three days, as they were the best he had ever had!

The construction updates will be fairly short as the construction is getting close to being finished within less than a couple months. When the bids are awarded for the covered walkways, there will be more to report. The VA inspection was performed and will require some minor changes concerning architect/engineering issues before it's passed. It is expected to be remedied in a short time which will allow more resident veterans to be admitted.

Construction Updates:

Community Bld, Maintenance Bld, Cottage #1 Cottage #2, Cottage #3 are completed and under the operations contractor Eduro's control.

Cottage #4: The carpenters finished their trim and FF&E package work. The sheet-metal guys finished up their trim work. Painters are done until start-up inspection. The floor-layers are laying linoleum with the expectation of them completing their work by the end of this week. At the same time, the carpets will probably be laying down in the corridors/entry-ways. The cleaners

will be coming in to do deep cleaning this week also. Remember, this is going to be the show cottage to be used for tours on the day of the Grand Opening.

Cottage #5: The sheet-rock taping/mudding to a level #5 is taking place in the central common area and is close to being turned over to the painter. The painters have finished painting the bedrooms and the spa room. ARJO have finished installing the patient lifts. The tile layers are scheduled to start tiling the resident bathrooms this week. The sheet metal workers have most of their major work done but will have to wait for the other crafts to get further along before working on more of the trim work. The carpenters will be doing their trim work.

Becker Landscaping: These guys continue to rake out topsoil and are planting trees, bushes, flowers and laying grass/sod.

R&K Concrete are replacing some defective sidewalks.

Zemlijak should be on the job this week to level and grade the area where the construction trailers and conex containers have been.

Things are really getting closer to that completion date we've been waiting for. The foundation is ready to help take care of our resident veterans in areas of recreation/visitation/entertainments/etc. The operation contractor is being pretty careful and as more of the restrictions of Covid-19 are being lifted, we will be better able to have more personal interaction with these resident veterans.

Just down the road, north of our Vet Home, the new VA CBOC Medical Treatment Facility continues to march on with its construction. The roof is sheeted, and other parts of the roof are getting trimmed out. As is the case everywhere, it is a struggle to get material needed for building progress to continue. Wayne Paffhausen is working hard to get sheet rock from his building suppliers. He's a bulldog and will get it bought and delivered. Hoffman Excavators are getting the site lot leveled/graveled and doing some landscaping on the boundaries. This will be a great looking building and will be used for Veteran's to be treated many years to come.

I would caution that with record number of tourists visiting our WE MT Region, that we be careful, as another pandemic isn't what we want to see happen. Until next time, enjoy this summer weather!