

Southwest Montana Veteran's Home Update #68

By Mike Lawson

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

Again, it's an "outside picture show" in seeing all the activity on the outside within our Veteran's Home site. Cement is being poured, ground being graded to specifications, siding going up, etc., are the main outside activities. All these can be seen while driving by or more easily seen in the relaxation of the "Viewing Hooch". The "Viewing Hooch" story a great one this week. Site Superintendent Mike Ascheman called me to ask what we wanted to do with the Viewing Hooch as it had to be moved due to being in the way of the dirt work construction that needed to be done where it was located. The view from that location was being blocked by the newly constructed Maintenance Building and to get it moved to a better viewing area would be a good option, anyway. The problem was the only location for it to be moved to was across Blacktail Loop Road, west of the main gate. This property is owned by the Harringtons from the Pepsi Cola Bottling Company which is owned by Shirley Harrington and her daughter Lynn Hirschy. Ronny Peterson got ahold of them and was given permission and I then talked to Cory Markovich, who had his truck crane and personally moved it to its' present location, on the west side of the Blacktail Loop Road. Many thanks to both of these group of folks who have done so much for the veterans connected to this project. This turned out to be the perfect location with a wonderful view, right up the center of our Vet Home site. It's very relaxing to sit, look out the two picture windows and watch all the activity going on. You'll treat yourself, if you come to Butte or are from Butte, to make a point to stop, go inside, relax and watch this construction show take place.

Construction Updates:

Community Building; — Interior: Other than the arrival of some back-ordered door hardware to be installed this week, things are on hold. The floor layers need good heat for the flooring adhesion process and electricity to run their machines. Hopefully the electricity will be turned on and gas piped into this building, this week. I'll say more on this electrical/gas situation later in this article. The plumber wasn't working in the cottages, but is expected to be back here, this week, to set and hook up the sinks and get water hook-ups going on the toilets/sinks.

Exterior: I think I have been spelling this wrong as this covered area to the entrance of this Community Building for the purpose of sheltering people when entering or leaving their vehicles is spelled "Porte-cochere". My apologies. That being said, the siders have been busy in this area with putting covering over the ceiling soffit of this structure, as well as doing siding. This is probably going to be completed this week. The sidewalks around this building as well as the patios have been prepped and are ready for the cement folks to build their forms and make the perspective cement pours for them.

Cottage #1; —Interior: The tiling is close to being done. They have to do another job off-site job, for a couple of weeks and then will start on Cottage #3 and from there to Cottage #2. John Kotka said the cabinet counter tops in the bathrooms and kitchen are expected to be installed this week. The bathroom door-jams came and all the bathroom doors are hung except the spa bathroom. These doors will be trimmed out this week. He expects the bathroom/shower grab bars and fold-down seats to be installed this week also. The raised panel fireplace trim is scheduled to be trimmed out. Once this is done the carpenters will be about done in this Cottage #1 building.

Exterior: Entryway completion is waiting for an engineering decision on sprinkler insulation before the carpenters can finish their work which is minimal.

Cottage #2; — Interior: Some sheetrock hanging. Attic ladder was installed. Plumber's doing some rough-in. FRP Panels are complete.

Exterior: Nothing at this time.

Cottage #3: Sheetmetal working on mechanical and Plumbing guys working on gas-line rough-ins. The taping and mudding process is about done and ready for painting. The FRP install is in progress. Ductwork insulation is in progress. Suspended ceiling framework installation in the next week or two.

Exterior: Siding is ongoing.

Cottage #4; —Interior: The Carpenters finished framing the Coffered Ceilings. The Plumber was working on gas-lines. HVAC and Mechanical insulation in progress. Control installation is in progress. Insulators will insulate walls once plumbers and electricians get their in-wall work done.

Exterior; Some siding is being done but the concentration is on getting the Community Center done.

Cottage #5; —Interior: More activity going on here with all the trades doing more rough-in work.

Exterior: Nothing this week.

Maintenance Building; Interior; One of the garage doors was hung.

Exterior; The cement apron pad in front of this Building was poured.

Zemljak Excavating: Mike and his crew are all over this site doing sidewalk /patio prep, moving dirt to bring areas to grade for future gravel and paving, shaping drainage for drainage ditches and the list goes on. One hell-of an operator/owner who is operating and directing his guys on all facets of the work he's involved in.

The big thing happening this week is Northwestern Energy coming on site to install the main gas-line and then running gas-lines to the gas meter at each building. With the weather getting cooler this couldn't come at a better time, as some of the building need heat now and the others will soon. The floor guys as well as the sheet rockers need warm temperatures for their work. The other hold-up was the electricians waiting to get electricity to the buildings, until after the gas-lines were in. It's always the fear that when digging a ditch, the possibility of hitting another line, such as in this case an electrical line, can happen. Better safe than sorry as the old saying goes. Getting this gas-line in and hooked-up will really propel the construction process forward on this, our Vet Home Site.

A lot-off Veterans are putting in applications to be residents and many folks are applying to work at our Veterans Home. The interest on both counts is encouraging. Looks like the end of October and into November before the start of the Cottage #1's soft opening. As we learn more, that information will be shared.

This Covid-19 is having an effect on our world, as we know it, and our Vet Home is no exception. It's an adapt and overcome process with the safe being of everyone involved having to be the first consideration. How and when the Grand Opening is to be handled is being carefully thought-out by the powers in charge. When we're able to share that we will. Please think about those around you. Mask and distance for their sake as well as your own. Stop at the "Viewing Hooch" and get a great view of our Vet Home construction in progress. Until next time, take care.