

Southwest Montana Veterans Home Update #100

By Mike Lawson

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

I would like to start this update out on a happier note but it's with a sad heart in sharing that one of our SW MT Veteran Home Residents passed away on Thursday afternoon. He was one of the first residents admitted to Cottage #1 and was beyond happy to be there. His name was Herb Nepine, who I have known for many years. He was a Vietnam Combat Army Veteran and for the last 20 plus years has suffered from a disabling muscle disease. Herb was a Native American Warrior who faced this disease with dignity/courage, maintaining his pride to the end. He is at peace now and we express our condolences to his three daughters who survive him.

The weather has been on the cool side but warm enough to see construction around town really taking off. As far as our Vet Home is concerned, the wait continues for the folks to come and do their inspection for Medicare. The word is that they're doing a lot of Covid-19 inspections and are behind on their work. Hopefully this inspection will come very soon as the scheduled Veterans waiting in the wings to be admitted are getting pretty anxious, and I don't blame them. Liaison Mark Gollinger and I, accompanied by General Foreman John Kotka, did a walk-through of Cottages #2, #3, #4, and #5. I'm always impressed with what has happened from one week to the next. Construction is expected to be completely finished by the end of June. We can see things coming quickly together gathering momentum for the finish line.

Construction Updates:

Cottage #1, #2, Community Center and Receiving/Maintenance Bldg. are finished.

They have been turned over to the state, who has turned them over to the Operating Contractor Eduro.

Cottage #2: Minor backup punch-list was done for the nurses concerning some touch-up painting.

Cottage #3: Some finish touch-up painting. Carpenters did a fiberglass reinforced panel replacement. They also finished the FF&E package installation, through-out this Cottage. 360 Office Products placed furniture in all the resident rooms in the East Wing. Cleaners did a final thorough cleaning in the East Wing.

Cottage #4: Sheet-rockers have all the sheetrock hung except for the Soil Room. The Tapers are pretty well done. The Painters continue to paint walls with color. The Tile Guys have moved from the East Wing to the North Wing this week and are working on the floors/walls. The Carpenters are working in the central area trimming out windows, light shelves in the living room, MDF trim (paintable trim), hanging doors, settings window jambs, and cutting/nailing casing. Electricians are coming in this week to start their trim-out.

Cottage #5: The Plumbers continue running their gas lines. The Electricians are finishing their can-light installation in the seismograph ceiling's framework as well as running wire to them. The Sprinkler Fitter adjusted sprinkler heads to the correct height, coming through the

seismograph ceilings. The Sheet-rockers are hanging sheetrock on the seismograph ceiling metal framework. The Tapers are putting their taping mud on with an 8" mud box, then with a 12" mud box and then with a 15" mud box. They then do a skin coat for a level 5 finish.

Becker Landscaping: The Becker crew has most of the water line in the perimeter ditches, around the complete Vet Home grounds. They dug the ditches with a Ditch Witch and with a bit of hand digging.

Zemljak Excavating: Adjusting some of the manhole heights to the correct elevations and has started to spread topsoil.

I talked with Wayne Paffhausen, who is the Owner/Contractor of the new VA Veteran CBOT Medical Center building. His son Todd Paffhausen is the Construction Superintendent and is running this job. Wayne said that Todd has worked for him since graduating from college and has built many buildings for him. Going by this site, one can see that the Visqueen plastic sheeting was laid over the compacted dirt within the perimeter footing walls, and that 5" of gravel was spread on top of it. This was 17,500 sq ft of gravel put down in one day! They plan to do the concrete floor pour this week and start framing next week. There will be two large drain barrels buried at each end of the site with 8" pipes going from them in dug ditches, to the building where 4" roof drain piping will connect to them. The 4" roof drain piping will be enclosed within the building's walls. Once the 8" piping is run to the building they can be buried, and the parking lot can be finished. Although a well will be drilled by O'Keefe Drilling, the water used in the building will be Butte City Water. The well water will be used for irrigation of lawns, etc.

Probably a 6 Zone system.

On the legislative side of things, HB5 and HB14 made it out of the Senate Committee and is on the Senate Floor where it can now be voted on. These are Bills concerning our Vet Home Enclosed Walkways and Cottage #6. The other bit of news for the Veterans is that the VA will give any Veteran a Covid Vaccine, as well as to the Veteran's caregiver if a veteran has one. Call to get scheduled. If you need a ride, the DAV Transportation can give you a ride to Helena to get your shot. The number for a ride is 490-3692, and you will talk to Darlene who is the DAV Coordinator. The Covid 19 numbers are down in our areas, but Bozeman is seeing a surge and Michigan is really surging, especially with younger people getting a stronger type of this Covid! I only say this as a precaution, especially with the tourist season coming into play and people traveling. Better to play it safe and get vaccinated.

I'll close for now. Until next time, take care.