

Southwest Montana Veteran Home Update#101

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.

This spring is on again and off again with this weather, which is typical for our part of the world. I received a picture from a friend on Facebook who lives in Spokane. His yard was summer green, and his trees had healthy buds on them. A bit of envy on my part. The Highlands have a good blanket of new snow which is a good sign for this summer, although some parts of the state are worried about having summertime drought conditions, which doesn't bode well for their crops. Praying for their well-being. The Covid-19 numbers are coming down with more vaccines being given. Silver Bow County is expected to have 83% of its population vaccinated in May. That's impressive! Sorry I don't have the data for you other 5 Counties, but I hope you also have good percentages vaccinated. Things are opening up and we're starting to look somewhat normal again. The advice is to still practice safety measures, such as distancing and wearing masks when around crowded places. I would also encourage anyone who hasn't gotten a vaccine to please do so. In one of our Veteran Organizations we had one of our members not get a vaccine shot as he wasn't convinced they were doing any good. He called me last week and told me that he and his wife both have Covid-19 and were pretty sick. They're quarantined until the 29th as long as they're feeling better by then. Our thoughts and prayers go out to them.

The two House Bills concerning our SW MT Veteran's Home, have passed the Senate and were sent back to the House with some amendments. This Montana Legislative Session will be over on the 30th of April, which is this Friday. If they do pass and are signed, we'll see construction continue beyond the expected June finish date on our Vet Home. Speaking about the Vet Home, Liaison Mark Gollinger, John Kotka and I did a walk-through last Thursday. It is always exciting to see progress taking place from one week to the next. I got a good briefing from both Mike Aschman and John Kotka, which really helps me put this Update together every week.

Vet Home Construction Updates:

Community Building: Even though this building belongs to the State of Montana, sometimes a "Change Order" is issued to change something to make it better. This building received one from the Engineering/Architect State Department. The change concerned putting a raised panel look on the two main entry columns, going into the building.

Cottage #2: The owners have taken possession.

Cottage #3: The Painters Punch-List continues but is close to being completed. John Kotka is going to fill the Spa Tub, making sure it works as it should and check for leaks.

Cottage #4: The Plumbers have tied all the domestic water lines into the Mechanical Room. Now everything can be turned on when ready. The Tile Layers are 100% done in the East Wing and are tiling floors in the North Wing. The Carpenters continue to hang doors, install door/window jambs and casings. They also pulled wire for the door automatic closures/ADA buttons/card readers. The Floor Layers will start laying linoleum in the East Wing Resident Rooms as well as the Central Building areas that are to receive it. The Cabinet folks from Great Falls are installing cabinets in the East Wing Resident Bathrooms/Kitchen/Spa/Nurses-Room/Medicine Room/ Washer & Dryer Room/Dining Room/etc. The Electricians pulled wire

for the fire alarm/lights and installed can lights into the vestibule (entry-way). The Painters have most of this building painted out. The Tapers are done. The Acoustical T-Bar Ceiling Grid is being installed, especially in the hallways. The Acoustical Tile will be installed along the outside border edges only, until the Sheetmetal/Plumber guys have everything installed above the ceiling. The sheet rocking is complete. The Tapers are boxing the inside/outside corners and taping the sheetrock joints. Lots to do concerning this work. The Sheetmetal guys are continuing with the installing of the overhead ductwork, tying the ductwork into the heating units in the mechanical room. The Plumbers are tying heat lines into the Air Handlers throughout the building. The Pipe Insulators insulated pipes and ductwork. The Electricians pulled wire/installed can lights in the Vestibule so that the ceiling could get sheet rocked. The Carpenters pulled wire into the Vestibule for the door closure hardware.

O'Keefe Drilling hooked up the well pump so Becker Landscaping could hook water to their main supply line for sprinklers.

Becker Landscaping: Main water line, running along the border of the site was turned on and checked for leaks. They continue to dig the sprinkler lines coming off the main water line.

Zemljak Excavating: Spreading top-soil around the Community Center and will move to other areas of the site in sequential order.

The other veteran related construction is the new Veteran Medical CBOT building, located right off the Interstate between the Harley Davison Dealership and Highland View Drive. When observing from the road, the gravel was laid down before the floor cement pour was to take place and was compacted. Probably because of weather, the projected cement pour hasn't taken place yet. If decent weather prevails, I would guess they'll make the the pour during the week as Wayne Paffhousen wants to start the wall framing by May 1st.

Other Veteran news will start being reported on as it becomes available. Our Veteran Organizations in our six county area are starting to get more active and getting their scheduled meetings in place again. I'll try and get those meeting times and activities reported in this article.

The Marine Corps League here in Butte will have their SOS Breakfast at Perkins at 9:00 AM on this Saturday, May 1st. All Marines, Corps-men, their families and friends are welcome. I would also mention the United Veteran's Council Honor Guard will have a Memorial Day Ceremony at the Veteran's Amphitheater in the Veteran's section of Stodden Park. All are welcome and seating will be available. The Honor Guard will then go to five of the local Cemetery Veteran Memorial sections to do a short ceremony at each. I might add that "Veterans help Veterans" and when Veteran Color Guards are short of members and need help, the UVC has been honored to complement their members in joining them for conducting Veteran Funeral Graveside Honor Guard Services. They have been to Pony, Anaconda, Dillion, Twin Bridges, Sheridan, Laurin, Boulder, Melrose and Divide Mt. It's always an honor in being part of the laying of our veteran brothers/sisters in their final resting place.

I'll close for now, until next time.