

Southwest Veterans Home Update #16

By Mike Lawson

Greetings once again to you the Veterans/Counties/Communities who are the six counties in SW Montana who are represented as the organizers and chief supporters of the "SW MT Veterans Home". This is the 16th update on our Veterans Home.

The weather is turning cooler with snow in the Highland and the Pintlar Mountains. This is Saturday with one more day of summer but "Mother Nature" isn't cooperating. Through-out this week the construction workers on our Vet Home worked, whether it rained or not, and got a lot done. The site Construction Superintendent Mike Ascheman is on top of things and coordinating all the different contractors in putting their parts of the job together at the right time and the right place. He again is my "go to guy" on what has happened this past week and what will happen this week.

The Community Center Building has seen most of the interior walls framed and now their working on a smaller upper mezzanine floor section that will house some of the utilities such as the furnaces, etc... Getting the laminated beams in the ceiling as well with the steel supports for them is also happening. The roof trusses aren't too far off. Mike is going to have to put some of these carpenters on Cottage #3 this week to get it ready for a cement floor slab pours things will slow down a bit until they get back.

Cottage #1 did see some activity this week. Mike had guys grinding the outside of the cement walls smooth, putting seal coating on and then insulation board glued to that. When Zemljak Excavating can break free from working on other parts of the job, they'll backfill around these foundation walls to the specified ground level that the site plan calls for.

Cottage #2's slab floor was poured by Steed Concrete and looks good. Again they had to fight weather conditions that were not ideal for a concrete pour but did a good job in getting it done.

Cottage #3 is where most of the activity has been and continues to be. Zemljak filled/compacted the inside of the foundation walls, dug ditches for the Plummer's and Electricians and is in the process of getting the six inches of self-compacting gravel in. After this is completed Mike will move some of his Markovich carpenters in to get the vapor barrier heavy plastic in/around the pipe/conduit stubs (sticking up in the air), across the compacted dirt and then glue plastic to the foundation walls above the compacted dirt. The same scenario will continue to happen as with Cottage #1 and #2. The rebar will be put in place and then Steed Concrete will come in and pour the slab floor. Mike's hoping this will happen on Thursday or Friday of this week, depending on the weather.

Cottage #4 has the exterior walls in place and is scheduled to get them poured this week by Phillips Concrete. Once these walls are done the interior walls will be formed/poured and wall forms stripped. Zemljak, as usual, will then backfill/compact to proper level and dig for the plumbers/electricians. The scenario continues as with the other Cottages.

Cottage #5 is the last Cottage scheduled to be built. The footings are surveyed and staked out. Zemljak will dig them when he can break free from Cottage #3 and #4. This might be the most expensive one if the weather is freezing and the ground frost becomes a factor.

All in all there's some significant bites being taken out of this elephant, as Mike Ascheman would say. Our Vet Home continues to change in appearance as these skilled workers construct different portions of our Vet Home project.

Before I sign off I want to relate a story about a retired lady who introduced herself to me when I was at the "Viewing Hooch". She said she had been reading these "Update Articles" and really wanted to help the Veterans in some way. I invited her to look our Viewing Hooch over and mentioned we were going to get a coffee pot, now that we had electricity, and get some paper towels/ spray cleaner to clean table and chairs. I came back from Helena Saturday and stopped at the Viewing Hooch. I was greeted with seeing a table cloth on the card table with a drip cup coffee maker, a can of coffee, packets of creamers/sugar/sweeteners and a gallon jug of water. In addition to this on the other table there was an eight roll package of paper towels and a spray bottle of cleaner. We veterans who saw this say, thank-you "kind lady" on behalf of all our vets. I didn't write your name down but would ask you to visit and sign our "Guest Book".

I'll close on that special note and wish you all a great week.