

# Southwest Veterans Home Update #34

By Mike Lawson

Greetings once again to you, who are the six counties in SW Montana who are represented as the organizers and chief supporters of the "SWMT Veterans Home."

The month of January is fast coming to an end and the weather, for the most part, is in a mild holding pattern. This has allowed our construction crews to make some good headway. I again had the privilege of doing a walk-through of our Veteran's Home site, visiting each of the buildings being worked on. As always, I checked in with **Site Construction Superintendent Mike Ascheman**, to get the detailed update on this past week's progress. He has a lot on his plate in coordinating, when different contractors can start their particular part of the job. An example is the Heating/Ventilation and Electrical Contractors, who have to wait for the carpenter framers to get the framing done to the point that allows them to get their material moved in. Then the insulators come in to insulate before the Drywall Contractors can come in and put sheetrock up. It's a continuous sequence, He has to stay up with, as well as getting the various types of construction material delivered on time so the construction progress doesn't get held up. He probably feels like he's dancing on a tightrope at times. We met **Carpenter General Foreman John Kotka**, as we were walking around the site. He's always moving, keeping his men lined out, working in the different Cottages and the Community Center. He's very enthusiastic about this Veteran Home being on schedule and being top quality from "top to bottom". It's easy to catch the enthusiasm, seeing him in action.

## Now for the updates:

**Community Center:** Walking through this building is an experience of awe, with the tall walls, wide halls and spacious rooms. The electricians have been busy putting conduit and electrical boxes in, throughout this building. This all has to be put in before the insulation can be put in, followed by the sheetrock. The Sheetmetal workers also have to get some of their heating and ventilation ductwork installed before the sheetrock goes up. Each step of this has to be inspected before the next Contractor can do his work. **Mike** said all of this is on the agenda for this week. Outside this building, the 3M peel and stick wrap is going on the outside of the exterior walls. **Mike** had the **3M-Inspector** come on site, to check if the application was being done properly and it passed with flying colors. It'll be pretty exciting to see this building a month from now.

**Cottage #1:** The roof is completely shingled, and the building is dried in. The rough plumbing in the walls, is close to being done. The sheetmetal workers are starting to work on their ductwork/heating systems. The pick-up framing of blocking and backing continues and seems to be never ending, the backing refers to a piece of board put between two of the wall studs, like the blocking, with the flat surface even with the outside/inside of the edges of the wall studs. The purpose of backing is to allow fixtures for electrical/plumbing/cabinets/etc. to be attached to them. Once the sheetrock walls are finished, these interior fixture items can then be installed onto this strong backing. The electricians/sheetmetal workers are probably working in #1 this week, after being in the Community Center. As with all the buildings, once the sheetrock stage begins, the beauty of the interiors will really come into play.

**Cottage #2:** The **Roof Trusses** are all rolled on and covered with the fire-resistant plywood sheeting. The roof underlayment/shingles process is being completed, as you read this update. With that said, the "dry-in" stage is pretty much in place. The pick-up framing continues, the inspections continue and **General Foreman John Kotka**, using his check-list, is paying attention to **quality control detail**, making sure things are done right according to the **specifications** that have to be followed. The

beautiful Gable Roof Entrance is close to being completed and adds a lot to the design on these buildings. The plumbers have moved in and are doing their in-wall, rough-in piping/vent plumbing. The Sheetmetal workers are right behind them in getting their roof penetrations completed. Things are moving well here.

**Cottage #3:** We've been clapping our hands, as some of the exterior walls have been stood up with most, if not all, the rest to follow this week. It's a beautiful sight, when this stage of construction on a cottage takes place. The interior walls will naturally follow and with the Roof Trusses on site, Mike and John expect to see these trusses, rolled into place in a couple of weeks. As long as everyone makes it to work, to fully man the job, the progress will unfold before our eyes as the march goes on, to the September 30th completion date.

**Cottage #4:** The good news is this Cottage is no longer on hold, as **GF John Kotka** is snapping the exterior wall lines and putting the exterior, top and bottom wall plates down along these lines. The explanation for this is that the top and bottom 2'x6" boards that the wall stud boards are nailed between are called wall plates. Before these studs are placed between these plates to make a wall, John puts them together on the floor along his snapped lines. Once this happens, he then, using the buildings blueprints, does the layout for all the windows/doors/etc., by marking these with a carpenter's pencil. The carpenter framers then assemble the walls according to his layout markings. Window and doorway headers are built, as well as the proper cut lengths of the wall studs before assembling. So now, the wall puzzle pieces are ready to be put together along these snapped lines, that GF John Kotka prepared, for this stage of the process. Staying ahead is important, so the construction crews can finish one job and move right onto the next one. Remember, there's only one more Cottage to start work on, so "the seeing is believing" is happening right before our eyes.

**Cottage #5:** Just waiting for the framers to finish enough work on the other Cottages to start layout and framing. Don't expect it to be more than a month out.

A representative from a company called "**ARJO**", met with **Site Supt. Mike Ascheman**, concerning the "**overhead patient-lift rails**" that will have to be installed on the ceiling trusses, before the ceiling sheetrock can be nailed in place. Sounds like they'll be on the job, doing just that, in the next week or so. Having these "**Patient Lifts**" in every room, is another quality control piece of the puzzle that continues to show the superior quality of this, our "**SW MT Veteran's Home**".

Our **SW MT Foundation** is continuing to move forward, and we just got our "**501c3**" from the IRS. Our next meeting will be at the new **American Legion Hall on Winn Avenue, just north of Homes Ave. at 1:00 on February 3<sup>rd</sup>**. Everyone is welcome.

Our **Liaison Mark Gollinger** is going to try and get another "**Drone Flyover**" in the next week or so and it will be posted to our **Veteran Home Web-site [SWMVH.Mt.GOV](http://SWMVH.Mt.GOV)**

The **Viewing Hooch** is open for you to stop and have a cup of tea or coffee, some cookies/candy etc... There's also some **applications** for our Vet Home on a table by the windows. If you have questions you need to ask me, my e-mail address is **[lawsonml@mac.com](mailto:lawsonml@mac.com)**

Take care until next time.