

Southwest Montana Veteran's Home. Update #47

By Mike Lawson

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

Our state of Montana is still locked down, but a partial reopening is now happening, and hopefully better things are to come. Our Veteran Home construction is moving forwards by leaps and bounds in some ways, and in other ways the tedious work that just takes time, is moving forward. It's just something that takes patience and you can't rush it. As always, it was great, to get a briefing from Site Superintendent Mike Ascheman and Carpenter General Foreman John Kotka. Their input really sets me up, as to what to look for when doing the Vet Site walk-through on Fridays. Liaison Mark Gollinger, again as he always does, took a lot of pictures. Check out our Vet Home Site, SWMVH.Mt.GOV., to see them. If you can drive by our Vet Home, you'll be pleasantly surprised at the eye changing progress taking place there.

Construction Updates:

Community Center

Interior: The mudding of the sheetrock, continues. Talking with one of the guys doing this, he said it was being done to a Level 5, which means they have to put 5 coats of sheetrock mud on the walls. Once this is done, the walls will, as John Kotka says, be smooth as glass and ready for painting. This is close to being done. Mike Ascheman is pushing to get the suspended ceiling in, but the metal framing system material for that, didn't get here as expected. He was assured it would be here this week, so "Plan A" for last week will be "Plan A" for this week. The other push is to get the tilework done in the bathrooms. The other sub-contractors are now working in the other buildings until the above work is in. They can then, continue doing their finishing work.

Exterior: The wall siding is up to the eaves, on the north and west sides and a portion of the south side. It's a two-color siding and looks pleasing to the eye. Mike said more siding guys, should be coming on the job, for many of them were on other jobs that needed to be finished up. Once they finish this building, they can move right over to Cottage #1.

Cottage #1

Interior: The sheet rockers are hanging lots of Sheetrock. I've said it before and again, I can't begin to express the volume of sheetrock that goes into these buildings. It's incredible. The bathrooms with their special Den's Fiberglass Board for tile, the green water-resistant board above that and the concrete Hardy Board for the showers, is a specialty process, that is being started. Remember there are twelve resident room bathrooms in each Cottage, that will need this. Some of the sheetrock tapers are starting to mud and tape on a small scale. The Sheet Metal guys continue to work on the heating ductwork with its many components, that need to put together.

Exterior: All the blue board is installed, and the roof eave framing is mostly done. This Cottage is ready to be sided, when the siding on the Community Center is completed.

Cottage #2:

Interior: The electricians have got their rough-in wiring completed and have moved to Cottage #3. The Insulators are busy getting their insulation of the walls and ceiling installed, with vapor barrier heavy plastic over that. Once this is done then the sheet-rockers can start sheet-rocking. The Sheet Metal guys are continuing to do their, Heat System Duct Work.

Exterior: The 3M Vapor Barrier material is still being installed around the doors and windows and is on the east sidewall. The plan is for the hollow metal door frames and windows to begin to be installed, starting this week. This will be followed by the foam insulation blue board being put up. A couple of John's carpenter framers were doing some of the roof eve framing.

Cottage #3

The main guys working in here are the Electricians doing their rough-in wiring and electrical work. A couple of the carpenter framers were building catwalks above the ceiling, for the sheetmetal guys to put some of their Heating System Ductwork on. A little bit of sheetmetal work going on also.

Cottage #4

This is again where a lot of framing is going on. All the exterior/interior critical walls are standings, the resident roof trusses are rolled up into place and the fire-resistant plywood roofing sheets, have been nailed on the north resident wing. Mike Ascheman said he has the truck-crane coming on Monday (this week), at which time the rest of the trusses over the central common area will get rolled up into place. As John Kotka said before, it's takes about three weeks to complete a roof. Exciting to visually see what's going on here. If you drive by on Continental Drive, you'll get the best view of this building, Cottage #4.

Cottage #5

John said he would try to get some layout done here, this past week, and he did. He has most of the exterior wall "Top and Bottom Wall Plates" laid out and lined up around the outside floor perimeter of this building. I wouldn't be surprised to see walls standing in about three weeks. This is the last cottage so the excitement builds.

One of the things that John Kotka emphasized, that is important to both he and Mike Ascheman, is that, "Good Preparation is the Key" to be successful on a well run construction job. As a Construction Site Superintendent, for Mike, it's critical to have the preparations done in the sequence they're supposed to be done in. This is important so the job isn't held up due to somebody not doing their part ahead of someone else, or material being on time so the workers are not standing around waiting for material. His preparation can make or break a job. For John Kotka, being the Carpenter General Fore Man, he has to have work lined out for his framers to do beforehand. Time is money and your guys standing around with nothing to do, costs the contractor money. A good example on these buildings, is the building of different components of the walls, beforehand. The door and window headers are a good example. It's also having a constant punch list/layout preparation, beforehand that makes this job run smooth for John, and consequently for everyone up the chain to the contractor. This also includes the inspectors, the state and ultimately the veterans.

Not much coming to us from the state level, this week. Hopefully we'll know who won the logo contest by next week. No Foundation meeting until June, because of this Coronavirus.

We'll open the Viewing Hooch up in another week or so, depending how the lifting of the "stay in place" rules go. Things are looking up, so don't let down your guard. Take Care until next time.