

Southwest Montana Veteran's Home Update #48

By Mike Lawson

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

The old saying "There's light at the end of the tunnel" could very well be said of our Veteran's Home, now. Serious work has started on Cottage #5 which is in fact, the last Cottage to be built. Our weather has been kind to us this past week and has lifted our spirits in seeing this Vet Site move forward. It's also encouraging in seeing the restrictions, imposed by this Coronavirus Pandemic, starting to be lifted. I will add, please be careful and take precautions. I again had great briefings by Site Construction Superintendent Mike Ascherman and Carpenter General Foreman John Kotka, which is always the case. They really make things come alive and take great pride in all the things happening on this job. They know that in the finished product, the Veterans are going to benefit from the great quality work being done here. Mark Gollinger and I did a walk-through on Friday and were impressed at the progress, especially on Cottages #4 & #5.

Construction Updates:

Interior: Things are more on the quiet side here, with the Sheetrock "mud guys" ready to put the final, 5th coat of mud on the walls. It's my understanding that "Collins Painting" has a machine to do this. The walls already look good, so I can imagine the final outcome being even better. Plan A was for the "Suspended Ceiling Metal Framework" to be put in this week, but due to it not arriving on site, that didn't happen. Mike said that the local building material supply company, "Builder's First Choice", picked up this material on Friday and will get it on site on Monday. So, Plan A for this week is to get that installed and get the ceiling put in. Once that's in, the Sheetmetal guys can get their ceiling vent components in and the Electricians can get the ceiling light fixtures in. A lot of other finish follow-up work will then happen, that will be mentioned in updates to come. There was one Sheetmetal guy, (Heating System Duct-Work), and one Plummer working, (Boiler System), in the interior of this building this week.

Exterior: The exterior is all about siding, which is progressing. This week should see most of it up (Hopefully!). It is very appealing to the eye, so try and drive by and look things over.

Cottage #1: Interior: The Sheet-Rock Hangers finished up and have moved to #2. The tape and mud guys have moved in and have an amazing amount of work ahead of them. More guys have been hired, which should help.

Exterior: Ready for siding.

Cottage #2: Interior: The electricians are done with their rough-in electrical, for now. The sheet metal guys continue their heating system Duct-work and all that's involved with that. The inside of the exterior walls are insulated and heavy 10 mil plastic air barrier put over that. The bottom of the roof trusses have heavy, 10 mil plastic air barrier stapled on them, with cardboard baffles installed where the roof trusses meet the top of buildings walls, under this plastic. This baffle installation prevents the blown insulation from escaping, when being blown in. Once the insulation is blown in the sheet-rock hangers will sheet rock the bottom of the trusses. The Bay

Windows (Bump Outs), will get the Core Bonding Foam Insulation, applied this week also. The one side of the interior walls are getting sheet-rocked and will be followed by the sound barrier insulation being installed. Once this is done the sheet-rock will go over that and be ready for the tape and mud guys to tape/mud the seams/nail-heads/etc..

Exterior: The “3M Vapor Barrier Peel and Stick” continues to be applied on the outside of the exterior walls. This is being followed by the installation of the Hollow Door Frames (stuffed with insulation) and the exterior windows. This complete process is expected to be done this week. The roof soffit framing, located between the bottom edges of the roof and the top of the exterior walls, was also completed.

Cottage #3: Interior: The electricians and sheetmetal guys are doing their rough-in work, which is extensive.

Exterior: It’s a possibility that the 3M Vapor Barrier work and window installation will get started here this week. This will depend on other factors such as the crew finishing up on Cottage #2.

Cottage #4: Interior: Lots of progress here, with mainly blocking and backing being framed in the interior walls and some wall framing.

Exterior: This was the eye catching show, we could see happening from the “Viewing Hooch” to some extent, but mainly, when watching, while parked on the side of Continental Drive. The rest of the roof trusses were rolled up into place and the complete roof was sheeted with the fire resistant plywood sheeting. The gantry entrance roof portion, will be framed and sheeted this week. Lots of framing left but this was an impressive move forward, to say the least.

Cottage #5: This is the last Cottage, so seeing work take place here, is that “Light at the end of the Tunnel”, I was talking about earlier. All the resident-wing walls are framed and laying on the deck/floor. GF John Kotka said that they’ll be stood up this week. Remember this is the last Cottage and we won’t see this happen again, unless by some miracle, Cottage #6 comes on board. Site Superintendent Mike Ascherman has the trusses coming within the next week or two. Seeing this last building with a roof on it, is going to raise the Southwest Montana Six County excitement level, too new heights. It’s been ten long years and the glimmer of the finished end is in sight.

Zemlijak Excavating continues to put in the storm drain system. He has lots of dirt work left to do, which will be reported on in the weeks ahead.

The state level communications are pretty quiet, with Shaunda and Mark working on getting the different things that will go into these Cottages, identified and bids submitted for them to be purchased. Things like furniture, beds, sheets/pillows, eating utensils, etc., are just a small portion of the efforts involved with this process. When our Veteran Home opens, all those things have to be in place. This is, without a doubt, going to be a “Top Of The Mark” Veteran’s Home and one we can not only take pride in, but one for our veteran residents, to love to call home.

In bringing this to a close, please be safe and follow the rules that will help lessen the effects of this coronavirus until they find a good way to treat it. Take care.