

## Southwest Montana Veteran's Home. Update #53

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.

Lots to report this week, as things are really progressing on all the buildings that make up this, our SW MT Vet Home. I always enjoy getting the scoop, as to what has happened this past week and what is going to happen this week. My go-to guys, being Site Construction Superintendent Mike Ascheman and Carpenter General Foreman John Kotka, are always upbeat and positive about the building of this project. Our SW Mt Vet Home Liaison Mark Gollinger and I did a walk-through on Friday and, as usual, were impressed with how much got done during the week. It's always interesting to see, if something is scheduled to be done and can't be done, due to material not arriving or other problems that they get hit with. Mike and John always have a back-up plan, to go to, to accomplish another piece of the project building puzzle. As we go through the building construction updates we'll see how they worked their building construction magic.

### Construction Updates:

**Community Center Building: Interior:** Every week we are anxious to see what has taken place here, since the last time we walked through. We were not disappointed. The ceiling are the big story, as all the T-Bar metal grid framing is in place, with all the Yellowstone Acoustical Grid ceiling panels installed. The sheet rock ceiling areas are being put in place and the probability of them wrapping this up, this week, is highly likely. The interior door hardware was installed for the doors that were hung. There are a few specialty doors that have yet to be delivered, which are expected this week or next. The electricians/sprinkler head guys and the sheetmetal guys were busy putting the ceiling vents, ceiling overhead light cans and the ceiling sprinkler head sections in place. These are finish work applications and gives us a glance, at the light at the end of the tunnel, for this Community Center Building completion. GF John Kotka is wanting to have some carpenters, doing finish trimming here, especially on the window boxes. This will really give a finished look to the rooms of this building.

**Exterior:** The siders are doing beautiful work and are ready to tackle the "Portico Entrance", which will entail a lot of work. I encourage anyone to drive by and see how beautiful this building is looking.

**Cottage #1: Interior:** The big happening here is the mud and taping, which is time consuming but it's progressing nicely. As this is going on and a certain amount gets done, the other crafts can move into the next phase of their individual work. The Sheetmetal and Plumbers are doing just that, in hooking components together, concerning the hot water piping and the heating system. The emphasis is in the Mechanical Room. The Fire Suppressant guys were also continuing on their work.

**Exterior:** It's all about siding, as the siding crew is going to town. The siding is a different color than the Community Building. It is a Grey trim with Blue-like siding. Drive by and take a look, as it's right next to the Blacktail Loop Road. It has a great look to it and John Kotka calls it the "Spirit of the USA".

**Cottage #2: Interior:** Sheetrock is still being hung in this building, but is getting closer to the end. The Plumbers and SheetMetal guys, continue to work on their rough-in hook-ups, etc..  
**Exterior:** This building is ready for the siding crews to start siding it. It will be a different color than the Community Center Building and Cottage #1.

**Cottage #3:** The electricians are continuing to pull wire and install electrical boxes/conduit/etc.. Plumbers are finishing some of their rough-in piping. Insulators are scheduled to do sound insulation on interior walls. I mentioned last week about the shortage of sheetrock hangers. Between Mike Ascheman and Collins Painting, a Mexican Crew from Bozeman was hired and are working, hanging sheet rock in this building. Mike said the Mexican workers across the country, have specialized in this process. They have a good reputation for doing good work, are reliable and are hard workers. This will definitely help keep this job on schedule and not get behind.

**Exterior:** Before the 3M Vapor Barrier, Peel and Stick material, can be applied, caulking of the corners and joints has to be done. This has happened on this building, with the 3M application following. This is then followed by window installation and the insulated foam Blue Board. The exterior building door frames have all been installed.

**Cottage #4: Interior:** The electricians are doing their, ongoing, rough-in of pulling wire/box installation/running conduit. The SheetMetal guys are working on ductwork and roof penetrations for roof vents. The Carpenters are close to being done for now after having framed/installed soffits as well as most of the blocking/backing.

**Exterior:** The exterior door frames will start to be installed. Caulking is started and possibly the 3M Vapor Barrier process will begin. This will then allow the window installation to get started.

**Cottage #5;** The best way to see this building is from the Continental Drive side, which is directly east of our Vet Home Complex. Most of the interior framing is completed, with framing of backing/blocking and soffits, continuing. The roof trusses on the resident wings were rolled up into place and sheeted with the fire resistant plywood sheeting. The Central Common Area of this building will see the roof trusts rolled into place this week, as a Monday delivery of them to the site, has been promised.

**On-Site Work:** Electricians have started working on the exterior “underground conduit/electrical line” work, which goes from the “Electrical Vault Building” to each of the Cottages. The excavating work by Mike Zemlijak and crew, has seen most of the waterlines/storm drain system, completed. He has some “Retaining Wall” to build on the SW and North side of our Vet Home Site. Mike Ascheman is coordinating, in getting the pads poured for the Well House, the Electrical Vault Building and the Maintenance Building. Steed Cement Construction, out of Great Fall, has the contract to pour these pads. They would like to make one trip down and pour them all at the same time, which makes perfect sense. A big obstacle, Site Construction Superintendent Mike Ascheman, is dealing with now, is to get off-site parking for all the construction workers. The construction has progressed to the point of all these vehicles being in the way, of this next phase of construction. The Harrington family, who generously donated the land for our SW MT Vet Home, own the property north of us. This would be a good alternative, for our construction workers to park their vehicles. The Harrington family, has been so supportive to our Veterans and this Vet Home, that I think they would be willing to allow this to happen. Mike’s in the process of contacting them.

SW MT Vet Home Liaison Mark Gollinger, continues to work behind the scenes, doing things most of us aren't aware of. He is in the process of acquiring Kitchen Equipment, Linens, Maintenance tools etc., needed for the operation of the home but not covered by the construction contract. We can only imagine the scope of this. In the process, of shopping, Mark has to compare sources in order to get the best deals for our Vet Home, the taxpayers and to meet the satisfaction of the supervisors of the state, who will review these purchases with a fine tooth comb.

Now that we're in Phase #2 of the state Covid-19 requirements, I expect the SW MT VET Home Foundation to start meeting soon, as we have important ongoing Veteran business/needs to address. As soon as a date is available, it will be published.

In closing, stay dry, be safe, and respect one another, in the climate our country is experiencing.