

Southwest Montana Veterans Home. Update #56

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"

Mostly good weather this past week and the forecast for this week we're in, is a mixed bag of sun and rain. This really has a big affect on outside activities, which are becoming a major factor, concerning the grading for streets/sidewalks/curbs and landscaping. It's now July and this is the season these things need to be done. I did a walk-through with Liaison Mark Gollinger this, our SW MT Vet Home site, and continues to be eye-opening in many great ways. Having a busy schedule and not being able to connect with Site Construction Superintendent Mike Ascheman and Carpenter General Foreman John Kotka, required a creative solution for briefing me, concerning the construction progress. Mike e-mailed in great detail and John visited me on the phone, on his way to Canyon Ferry Lake. These two guys go above and beyond because they love building this Vet home and truly care for the Veterans.

Construction Updates:

Community Center: Interior: Taping of the dropped sheet rock ceiling continues and is close to being done. The big multi-purpose room is still on hold for the electrical lighting redesign. Once this is approved and the lighting fixtures are in place the acoustic ceiling tiles can be put in place. This will then be ready for the flooring. John Kotka has started a couple of Carpenters framing the window trim. They'll do one room at time and I have to say, this trim that matches the deep rich brown color of the doors, really sets the tone of these rooms. Beautiful! The inside window screens will follow the trim work. John's checklist also has the installing of the exterior door hardware as time allows. Mike Ascheman is expecting the restroom's wall and tile work to have begun, Monday of this week.

Exterior: The Siding Crew is still waiting on the back-ordered gable vents and battens to arrive so they can finish-up on this building.

Cottage #1: Interior: The Sheetmetal guys are done in the Mechanical Room and their HVAC rough-in. The dropped sheetrock metal ceiling framing is ongoing. The Plumbers are running gas lines to overhead units in corridors. The Pipe Insulators are insulating the copper pipe. The Sheetrock Tapers are continuing to do the mud and taping. Getting closer.

Exterior: The siders continue to make progress and this building continues to take on beauty. Drive by and check it out.

Cottage #2: Interior: Initial sheetrock hanging is complete with the mud/taping process, ongoing. The Sheet Metal guys continue to work on the HVAC system and are close to being done. Plumbers are running some of their lines and are also close to being done. Mechanical insulation and control work is in progress.

Exterior: Waiting for the siding crew to begin siding.

Cottage #3: Interior: Initial sheetrock hanging is completed with the tape/mud process ongoing. Sheetmetal guys and the Plumbers continue to work on their rough-in work. The Plumbers are working on piping and the Sheetmetal guy are working on the HVAC ductwork. The Electricians are

done with their rough-in work. This is the building that the Mexican crew hung the sheetrock in and did a beautiful job. Their company was sub-contracted by Collins Painting as he needed to get these building done.

Exterior: The outside blue insulation board is close to being done which means another Cottage is ready to be sided.

Cottage #4: Interior: The Electrical rough-in is complete and has passed inspection, which now allows exterior wall insulation. This is scheduled for a Monday start date. Plumber's might move in this week and have just begun to do their work.

Exterior: The 3M, Peel and Stick, Vapor Barrier application is really moving well, with window installation taking place as the 3M, Peel and Stick, with window installation taking place as the 3M Vapor Barrier material goes over these window openings. The two carpenters putting the foam insulation blue board over this 3M material, are really moving quickly in installing these boards.

Cottage #5. Interior: The Carpenter framers have been doing the blocking and backing and are close to being done with this stage of framing. They also are framing and installing soffits for the coffered ceiling. No other Crafts are in this building at this time.

Exterior: When you get and read this article, the roof will have the roofing titanium paper covering done and the roof will in all likelihood, be completely shingled.

Site-Work: Lots going on here. The Maintenance/Receiving Building floor pad has been framed, gravel spread uniformly across the bottom, with tied rebar forming a checkerboard appearance above that. This is raised up above the gravel a few inches and gives strength to the floor, once it's poured. The Well House, Electrical Building and some other pads are scheduled to be poured along with the maintenance building, on Tuesday, weather permitting. The curbs/sidewalks/patios are about all that's left for cement work after this. That particular work is going to be done by "R&K Construction". Zemlijak Excavating will be preparing for the retaining wall block, to be built on the site's SW corner, by Cottage #1. He'll have 8 truck semi-loads coming in, 2 per day, this week.

I haven't really talked about the Architect Firm who designed and drew up the plans for this, our beautiful Veterans facility, the Southwest Montana Veterans Home. Throughout these updates you have heard mentioned the quality, the special aspects, the engineering, the quality of material, that are above and beyond what/how a normal facility is built. The beauty of the layout of each building is incredible and is tailored to make the Resident Veteran comfortable and to feel good about living out their end days here. The window views of the Highland Mountains, the East Ridge and yes, of Butte, are beautiful and will be experienced in a relaxed/comfortable setting. As the Sheet Metal Foreman told me "these buildings are engineered to the max". There's much more to say, but for now I want to thank "CTA Architects" who working with the "Architects and Engineering Department of Administration" of Montana, have created this incredible Veteran's Facility. This, in my opinion, will be a "Picture Post Card" for Veteran Homes across America.

Haven't heard anything from the state as to the operating of this, our Southwest Montana Veterans Home. I do encourage any and all of you, to drive by the construction site, stop at the "Viewing Hooch" for a cup, and watch the activity right in front of this building, which is where they're framing the Maintenance/Receiving Building. Enough for now, have a good week and please, practice being safe during this Covid-10 Pandemic.