

# Southwest Montana Veteran's Home Update #80

By Mike Lawson

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

The weather is the story of cold temperatures, but mostly blue skies. This isn't unusual for SW Mt and we who live here, learn to adapt. Our Vet Home Construction Site is well into this adaptation mode, especially in the outside areas. The obvious in this respect, is the thawing of the ground by Markovich Carpenter General Foreman and his carpenters. John Kotka and his guys use their ground-thawing machines. This is an expensive process but needs to be done to allow the RK Cement finishers to set their forms and pour the cement sidewalks/patios. A very bright spot on the inside work has been JA & Sons Enterprise coming on board. They are replacing the former sub-contractor, who obviously was unqualified and left many things that had to be fixed and redone, with lots of work left to do. The work that JA & Sons are doing, is the sheetrock hanging, tape/mudding and painting. They do very good work and have been working long hours, six or seven days a week. Glad to have them on board, and a relief for the continuation of construction for sure. Construction Site Superintendent Mike Ascheman really has his hands full keeping the many finish phases of construction on track. Especially in the Community Center and Cottage #1, which will be turned over to the State of Montana (the owner) on December 22<sup>nd</sup>. He and General Carpenter, Foreman John Kotka, generously shared this week's happening that help with the writing of this article. The other important source is Liaison Mark Gollinger and I, being able to do our weekly walk-through. This week John Kotka walked with us and was able to explain different aspects of the forward moving, construction progress. We also were able to talk with some of the construction guys doing the actual work. Their knowledge/skills are impressive and to be respected. To go through an apprenticeship in any of the Buildings Trades Professions, is equivalent to a College Degree and depending on the degree, pays better, with good benefits. Our Education System is sadly lacking, in offering Industrial Arts courses that could feed graduates into some of these Apprenticeships. We need young people in all the trades, as the older skilled journeyman, do retire and will need to be replaced.

## Construction Updates:

**Community Center—Interior:** This building is so close to being totally completed. The JA & Son's Painters are doing the final touch-up painting, on their punch list. The base rubber edging on the bottom of the walls meeting the flooring, is complete. The fireplace tile is complete. Electricians are in the finishing stages, of the light installation. John has a Carpenter finishing up on installing the last, FF&E package components. A change order for different sinks to be installed in the bathrooms, because of back-order brackets not coming, will see these new sinks installed this week. The big cleaning of this building has taken place. The completion stages being so close to being done, has now turned the green light on for the furniture to be moved in this week. This is a big deal, and this "Community Center" is about ready for occupancy. This, for me, is exciting!

**Exterior:** Patio and sidewalk on east end of building is scheduled to be poured within the next two weeks. The sidewalk handrail should be within that same timeline.

**Cottage #1—Interior:** Just a reminder that this building will get turned over to the state on December 22<sup>nd</sup>, along with the Community Center. With that said, upon entering this Cottage, we are really seeing a more finished appearance throughout. The Flooring is complete or very close to being complete. The Custom Cabinet folks will be in this week, to make a couple of punch-list adjustment changes, and will then be completely finished with their work, in Cottage #1. A Carpenter will finish installing the last of the FF&E package components. The cleaners are scheduled to do the big cleaning this week, which will then allow the furniture to be brought in. Things are looking good for this Cottage, to be turned over to the State on December 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Exterior:** The back Patio has a visqueen plastic sheeting tent, around it. The Markovich Carpenters will put heat into it, so that the cement for the Veteran Medallions, around this patio perimeter, can be poured and the medallions put in place. The sidewalk handrail should also be installed before the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Cottage #2—Interior:** This Cottage, along with Cottage #3, is tentatively scheduled to be turned over to the State (Owner) on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January. It is a picture of a lot of activity, going on with-in its walls. The JA & Sons Painters have all the taping/painting, pretty well done and are working on a punch-list of repairs/touch-ups. The Electricians are continuing to pull wire and have been trimming out light switches, outlets and some lights. The Plumbers have the gas lines hooked up, which enabled the Gas Meter to be installed. They're now running pipe to the overhead air handler heating units. "Yellowstone Acoustical" has all the T-Bar metal seismograph ceiling framework completed. John has 3 or 4 Carpenters trimming out, with installing/building window/door jambs, hanging doors and installing casing on both. "Custom Cabinets" are installing cabinets in Kitchen/Laundry Room/Nurses Station/Spa/Medicine Rm. Things are moving in a good direction in this Cottage.

**Exterior:** Nothing at this time.

**Cottage #3—Interior:** This Cottage is ahead of Cottage #2, in the construction phases and should meet the January 22<sup>nd</sup> deadline, with no trouble. Custom Cabinets will be installing the counter tops in the Kitchen, Resident Bathrooms, Nurses Station and the Medicine Room, this week. A couple of John's Carpenters will be installing the handicap grab bars, towel bars, and folding seats in the resident bathrooms. Once these are in, they'll start installing the bathroom mirrors. Plumbers are running gas lines in the Mechanical Room to the heating zone valves. The Electricians are trimming out switches and outlets throughout this Cottage, as well as hanging light fixtures. The Sheetmetal guys were setting the heating registers.

**Exterior:** Nothing at this time.

**Cottage #4—Interior:** The Plumbers are working on their rough-in. Yellowstone Acoustical has all the seismograph T-Bar metal ceiling framework completed. The JA & Son's sheet rockers are sheet-rocking the ceiling and doing clean-up. The Insulators blew the attic insulation.

**Exterior:** The siding crew were working on back columns, beams and soffits.

**Cottage #5—Interior:** Not much happening here, but with more finish work coming to an end in the Community Center and Cottage #1, the Electricians, Plumbers, and Sheetrock/Painters/Tapers are scheduled to move into this building in the next two or three weeks.

**Exterior:** The Siding crew continues doing the siding work.

Zemlijak Excavating: Mike and his crew continue working on the finish grading on site. They also do the prep for the sidewalks, ahead of the cement finishing crew.

R & K Concrete were able to pour the ten-foot sidewalk from the front Entryway of Cottage #3, to the street sidewalk. They also poured a ten-foot sidewalk from Cottage #5's Entryway to a shared radius with Cottage #4. Once the sidewalk is poured from the Cottage #4 Entryway to this shared radius, the ten-foot sidewalk will continue onto the street sidewalk. John and his carpenters keep the thawing machines busy, in thawing the ground, to enable the cement to be poured and cure properly.

Receiving/Maintenance Building: Everything that was stored in this building is being transferred into a big cargo trailer. Work to finish the inside this building, can now take place, once it is scheduled.

The Monument sign is on site and is scheduled to be installed this week. Another important step of being identified.

Our Christmas Season is here but is looking a lot different than any we have experienced, ever before, in our lifetime. Patience is sometimes hard but is needed in these tough times. Our hospitals are overwhelmed and those folks on the front lines working there, are exhausted and need whatever support we can give them. The biggest thing we can do, is be safe and hope/pray we stay healthy. Stay at home as much as possible, wear masks, avoid groups of people, respect and care for your loved ones and the list goes on. Hope is on the way, with vaccines and meds soon becoming available for us to receive and be treated with. Please be there for one another. This Covid-19 will be overcome, and life will once again become more like we remembered it to be. Take care, until next time.