

# Southwest Montana Veteran's Home. Update #83

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.

This has been a long-awaited week for the beginning of the opening, of our SW MT Veterans Home. Inspections were passed and the green light turned on for the first two buildings (Community Center/Cottage #1), to be turned over to the State of Montana. The State, in turn, gave the green light for the Operations Contractor, Eduro, to start moving their personnel into these two buildings. The first three residents will be admitted into Cottage #1 on the 4<sup>th</sup> of January, or shortly there-after. Construction wise, there are a few minor odds and ends to complete that won't interfere with Eduro's operation. Again, materials on back-order are the creation of some of the punch list work to be done. The main thing left is getting all the data cable installed, which concerns the "wifi and the internet". "Charter Cable" is running their cable underground between the Meadow Lands Apt. complex located where the Elizabeth-Warren St. dead-ends, into Continental Dr. and our Vet Home Site. Presently, Charter is drilling underground beneath Highland View Drive St., which is the street in front of Three Bears. Shouldn't be too long now, and it's extremely important! All the communications to the Vet Home site, the Electrical Building, and to the Community Center and all the Cottages, are dependent on these Data Systems. But all-in-all, everyone is feeling a fulfillment of these buildings now being ready to be used for the "veteran resident's care". Liaison Mark Gollinger is excited and has moved into his office in this building. He also feels that these two buildings have that "ready for use" feeling. Both Mike Ascheman and John Kotka mentioned that I won't have much more to say about these completed buildings. I told them that until Cottage #5 is completed, I'll continue to pick their brains and still have a respectable amount of update material, to write about. Not about to let those two off the hook! I say that with a smile as they take good care of me.

## Construction Updates:

**Community Center—Interior:** Some little punch-list odds and ends. The main work left is getting the Data Cable hooked up and ready for when Charter gets their underground cable to this building. The other work is some wallpaper replacement and touch-up. McKinstry Construction continues to work on programing. This work shouldn't interfere with Eduro getting their personnel trained and up to par in the different aspects of running our Veteran's Home. This will be their first week of moving into the Community Center. Exciting, for sure!

**Exterior:** Cement work is done, other than a little fill-in in the back of the building. The Siding Crew have some finish-up rain gutter/down spout work to do on the front entrance. Some handrail work is scheduled for the near future.

**Cottage #1—Interior:** There was a scramble to get work done ahead of the inspections this week. The wallpaper was installed, the concrete floors were sealed, the Fire Inspection passed, all the trade inspections passed and most importantly, the occupancy inspection passed. Some minor punch-list touch-up will continue until completed. The Man-Lifts/Controls will be installed on their overhead tracks and in all the resident rooms this week. McKinstry continues to do start-up programing, and the Data-Cable continues to be installed.

**Exterior:** Fencing is being installed around the back-patio area. The handrail is scheduled to be installed on the west-end block retaining wall. The outside bench pad was poured. The bench will be installed in the near future.

**Cottage #2 —Interior:** A busy place is the best way to describe this cottage! Keep in mind that this Cottage, and Cottage #3, is scheduled to be turned over to the State of Montana, on January 22<sup>nd</sup>. The Tile Crew are finished tiling the resident bathroom floors and are now tiling the walls. The Carpenters are following the Tile Crew installing bathroom doors/jambs/casing and door hardware. The Electricians are working on trim-out as well as working on the mechanical system. The Plumbers are working on zone valves in the mechanical room. All this work by the Plumbers and Electricians is getting the mechanical system ready for this Cottage to be fired up after the first of the year. In a nutshell, once working as it should, this Cottage will be self-heating.

The Sheet Metal guy, Derrick, was trimming out some of the duct louver vents. The Johnson Control System guys were pulling their low voltage wire through the conduit. They were also installing wall thermostats throughout this Cottage. The Fire Control folks were doing some of their low-voltage wiring work.

**Exterior:** The Cement Finishers poured cement around the edge of the back patio and installed the Veteran Medallions into it. They also poured some bench pads. The Siding Crew continues to install rain gutters and should be done this week.

**Cottage #3 —Interior:** The Plumbers have the gas piping done and are wrapping up the other piping and zone-valve work. The Electricians are doing trim-out work and are close to being done in the mechanical room. As in Cottage #2, this cottage is about ready to be self-heating. The start-up inspections will have to happen soon, and McKinstry will be programing and checking things out during this phase. Johnson Controls were pulling their low-voltage wire and are close to having it all done. The Data Cable guys were running their data cable-bundles overhead above the ceiling tiles.

**Exterior:** Nothing at this time.

**Cottage #4 —Interior:** This cottage looks better each week, I've come through here, in the last few weeks. The sheetrock hanging is close to being completed, and the Tapers are really making progress in getting the tape/mud-work progressing. The Plumbers are doing some rough-in work.

**Exterior:** The Siders continue working on the facia and soffits.

**Cottage #5—Interior:** The activity is really starting to pick up in this last Cottage being built. Both the Plumbers and Electricians are doing their rough-in work. The insulators have the inside of the exterior walls insulated, as well as all the interior walls done. All the vapor barrier plastic sheeting has been installed over the insulated exterior walls. The vapor barrier sheeting has been installed on the bottom of the roof trusses. This will allow the attic to be blown with insulation after being sheet-rocked. The Sheet-Rockers will start sheet-rocking in this Cottage this week. Progress here is really taking off in a good direction.

**Exterior:** The Siders continue with the facia/soffit/caliking work. The Cement Finishers poured the Patio and the South East sidewalk.

**Receiving/Maintenance Building:** This building was insulated, and sheet rocked. It is now being taped. The Plumber is scheduled to get the rough-in plumbing completed.

**The Electrical Building:** The Insulators insulated this small shed/building and it is scheduled to be sheet-rocked this week. The big emergency back-up generator that will kick in if the main power goes out, is scheduled to be hooked up this week by a factory rep from the company who sold it, for our Vet Home Site.

**Zemljak Excavating:** Mike and his crew were busy putting topsoil along the edges of the sidewalks. This is a good safety measure, as the edges of the sidewalks are exposed until the landscaper brings dirt in and plants grass. Once this is done, the sidewalk and grass will be at about the same level. Until then, this fill-in will keep folks from stepping off the sidewalk edge and getting hurt.

The front roadside fence along Blacktail Loop, will be coming down in the very near future. This will really allow the Southwest Montana Veterans Home sign, to stand out.

This year of 2020 is quickly coming to an end and it's been a dark period for the world, in many ways. The Covid-19 Pandemic is knocking the world for a loop. We in Southwest Montana, have seen friends and family become sick with it, as well as having seen many of them die. The nursing/rest homes have taken a tremendous hit. Our Southwest Veteran's Home is going to be the home for our Veteran residents, who are of a fragile age group of folks, being hit so hard by this Virus. We want to protect them in the best way we can. The Vaccines are being targeted to this age group so that they would be of the first to get them. Until this virus is under control, these residents will not be able to see very many visitors. This is for their protection. Family and friends will have to search other ways of communication with them until then. Telephones and using the Facebook and Zoom Apps can be a way. We can all come up with other ways, and your suggestions are welcome. The good thing is that they'll be in a beautiful environment! I have full confidence that Eduro will be well staffed and will give these Veterans wonderful and compassionate care. This will help lift their spirits and give their families a feeling of peace. Until this pandemic is under control, our visitation of this Veteran's Home site will be confined to a particular cottage once its completed. This will happen before the Veteran Residents who will call this Cottage home are admitted. Helping Veterans is always the focus, as they have served us and are now sometimes in need of being served/taken care of. We're privileged to now have the opportunity to start serving these incoming Veterans, who will call the "Southwest Montana Veteran's Home", their home.

I'll leave you by wishing you all a very "HAPPY NEW YEAR"!