

Southwest Montana Veteran's Home Update #87

By Mike Lawson

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

For me, the excitement keeps building as I watch two more of the Cottages getting closer to being completed and turned over to the state of Montana. This will probably happen in the next couple of weeks. Once again, the operating contractor, Eduro, will then take control of these Cottages and get them staffed. It's disappointing that a construction issue is in dispute between two of our state agencies and isn't resolved yet. This is keeping our first Veteran Residents from being admitted. Once this is resolved, it will be a "green light" for the rest of the Cottages to admit our Resident Veterans. Hopefully a fire will be lit under the ones responsible for bringing this to a mutual conclusion. It will then be our Resident Veterans waiting in the wings to get admitted to their new home.

Construction and Vet Site Updates:

Community Center: Other than a touch-up here and there, this Building is controlled/staffed/operated by Eduro.

Cottage #1—Interior: Same situation as the Community Center, with it staffed and operated by Eduro. Some housekeeping touch-up is still needed. McKinstry is doing some system programming.

Exterior: A change order for additional fencing outside the door on the west end, of the west wing.

Cottage #2—Interior: Taping/painting is about done, with final touch-up in progress. Cement Floors are sanded/scrubbed/mopped/sealed and ready for the Floor-layers to continue installing the flooring. The Tile-guys have the bathroom wall tiling close to being done. The Electricians/Plumbers/Sheet Metal guys have their work pretty well wrapped up. The cleaners are getting all the dust cleaned up. The Boilers are running and once the Cleaners are done, the Air Handlers will be brought on-line. This building will then be self-heating. It should happen this week when this article comes out. Carpenters are following the Tilers and hanging doors/installing door hardware, as each bathroom is completely tiled/grouted. After the resident bathrooms are tiled, the tilers will then tile/grout the spa room/bathroom. Once that is completed, the Plumber can finish their trim-out work and the Carpenters can install the Spa doors. The Carpenters are also installing the FF&E package, consisting of the glove/paper towel/soap/hand sanitizers/etc. dispensers. The ADA Handicapped door openers for wheelchairs are scheduled to be installed this week. Card readers are also expected to be installed on all exterior doors. Custom Cabinets will be installing cabinets and counter-tops this week. Complete Communication continues to attach their low voltage data-cable-wires into their panel box connections. McKinstry was doing some programming.

Exterior: The Fencing guys, set the metal fence posts in concrete around the rear patio area.

Cottage #3—Interior: This Cottage is ahead of Cottage #2 and should be ready to turn over ahead of Cottage #2. The Painters are finishing the touch-up painting. Derrick, the Sheetmetal guy, installed some of the finish grills on the duct-outlets coming through the ceiling/walls. The Floor Layers finished laying the linoleum in the kitchen and were working in the Dining and Living Room. This Week all the flooring should be wrapped up, all the appliances in the kitchen will be installed, and the duct work and copper pipe insulation will be finished. The Carpenters have the Spa Door to hang and will install the ADA Handicapped wheelchair door openers in addition to all the exterior door card readers. Complete Communication are attaching their low voltage data-cable-wires into their panel box connections. This Cottage is close for the Architectural Inspection, which will create a punch-list of any corrections that have to be made.

Exterior: The Fencing guys installed the fencing on the fence posts around the rear patio area.

Cottage #4—Interior: Tapers are close to having the walls ready for painting, having applied the last skin coat of mud on the corners and seams in the East Resident Wing. Electricians continue to pull wire. The Plumbers are running the gas/water lines to the air handlers as well as doing their rough-in work. Johnson Control was pulling their low-voltage wire.

Exterior: The Carpenters framed the front entry and rear patio columns. The Siders followed and sided these framed columns.

Cottage #5—Interior: The Sheet-Rockers were sheet-rocking the ceiling in the South Resident Wing, with a double layer of 5/8" sheetrock. They then sheet-rocked 42' inches from the ceiling down the sides of the upper walls. The Tapers will fire tape the corridors above the ceilings, which will allow the Plumbers/Sheetmetal/Fire-Suppression guys to begin their work.

Exterior: The Carpenters will frame the Front Entry/Patio Columns this week. The Siding Crew ran out of material, which stopped the soffit work. They did get some delivered and will probably finish the soffits this week.

Maintenance/Receiving Building: Sheetrock was finished, and it is now being taped/mudded. The Painters will then do the painting. Once that process is completed, the Carpenters will get the doors hung and door hardware installed. During that phase, the Electricians/Plumbers will do their trim-out work. The expectation is that this building will be all wrapped up and turned over to the state within two weeks.

Zemljak Excavating: Mike installed the Stop Sign at the entrance and started putting the 10" rock in the bottom of the storm water drainage ditches. He continues putting topsoil next to the sidewalks and patios for safety.

It was good to visit with Liaison Mark Gollinger, concerning the Eduro controlled part of our Vet Home. (This is the Community Center and Cottage #1). Mark said that this place is a flurry of activity. He went on to say that Brenna Anderson's team have been doing everything they can to prepare our Vet Home for its first resident veterans. The Director of Nursing, Nadine Eickbush, has been training her nurses and making sure they're competencies are current/up to date. The Environmental Services Manager, Ranae Blackledge, has her team doing intensive cleaning and washing of all the new linen. Lena Krum, Dietary Manager, and her chefs, have also been preparing their kitchen and training. On Friday, the SWMVH team was treated to a very tasty and healthy lunch. Mark said, "It was awesome to smell home cooking in Cottage #1 for the first time". He was impressed by the quality of the food and feels good that the residents will be eating great, tasty food.

As the construction keeps moving forward, and Eduro gets into the operational phase and moves to staff and get resident veterans situated, we are seeing our efforts that started so many years ago come to fruition. This Southwest Montana Veteran's Home will be taking care of Veterans long after we are gone, and that is gratification at its' best! We have exciting times ahead of us in making our resident veteran lives better in an environment of comfort and well-being. Once this Covid-19 is under control, we'll explore ways to interact and communicate with them more. It may very well be that any one of us who are veterans, could one day call this place our home. It's a comfort to know we have a place to go, to call home, if we are in a position to need this kind of care.

Take care and follow the health guidelines for you, your loved ones, and your neighbors. Until next time.