

Southwest Montana Veterans Home. Update #89

By Mike Lawson

Greeting once again to you, the Veterans/Counties/Communities of SW MT, who are the organizers/supporters of this, our Southwest Montana Veterans Home.

In my world it seems that a lot is going on concerning Veterans concerns. It started a couple weeks ago with going to Helena and testifying on HB14, concerning funding for covered walkways between our Cottages. The next was getting a call that concerned the graffiti painted on our Veteran's Amphitheater walls at Stodden Park. It turns out that the two people who did this, through a tip to Crime Stoppers, were identified and the male questioned. The disturbing part of the whole situation is they were both 14 yrs old. The male teenager had never been in trouble before and the police said without the Crime Stoppers Tip, they probably would not have connected him to this crime as he wasn't on their radar. He did admit doing it to the police. His grandparents, who are raising him, were devastated and he was in tears. He has to go before a judge, admit to it, and will have to do some type of restitution. I visited with his Juvenile Probation Officer about his type of restitution. Sounds like he'll have to work community hours until the damage is paid for. We discussed his visiting some of us veterans, doing some of his community service helping veterans on some of their projects. Even though I, and many of the local veterans, were upset and wanted justice served with the appropriate punishment administered, in this case, a reconsideration is in order that comes from the heart. In our teen years, we veterans don't have to think too hard to remember doing some foolish things we still regret. With that said and looking at this young man getting in trouble for the first time, we want to help get him on the right track. This is what Veterans do, we help others. Our hearts go out to this young man. He seems to regret his actions and turning him into a good citizen is a better alternative than turning our backs on him with a cold heart. If you're a praying person, put this young man in your prayers.

I keep wanting the issue settled of keeping our Veteran Home from accepting the resident veterans who will make this their home. It's frustrating, as some of these residents should have been admitted a month ago. Liaison Mark Gollinger said if there's a positive side to this, it's that the Eduro Staff are taking advantage of this delay by getting all the staff training up to par for each of the particular requirements for this industry. For example, some of these trainings involved the First Aid and CPR qualifications being updated, and Nurses completing a refresher course on their competencies and programs such as antibiotic stewardship. He also said some generous donations have been received from the local communities and people throughout Montana. Just in the last few weeks some heartfelt generous donations have been received from White Sulfur Springs, Deer Lodge, and the Southwest Veteran's Home Foundation. It's humbling in knowing our SW MT Vet Home is on the radar by so many! I just want to say, many thanks!

Concerning Our Vet Home and its construction, I again thank Mike Ascherman, John Kotka and my walk-through guide, Mark Gollinger. Talking to them and the construction workers, as well as seeing what's going on, is so eye opening and appreciative. It's the base for this weekly construction progress update, and you can have a good feel for what's going on every week when you read it. The excitement continues to build as more and more construction gets completed.

Construction/Operation Updates:

Community Center/Cottage #1; Construction completed with the Contractor Eduro, having both building Staffed. These staff folks have gotten things organized and are in a training mode, just anxiously waiting for the day the Resident Veterans begin to arrive.

Cottage #2—Interior: The big push is to get this Cottage completed, so lots going on here. The Carpenters are close to finishing the installation of the bathroom grab bars/towel bars/curtain rods/mirrors/ FF&E Dispensers. They installed all the television brackets in the resident rooms throughout this cottage. John also

had a couple of guys puttying the nail holes on the trim, with a matching color putty. Slow, tedious work for sure. All the doors/hardware/trim are completed.

The Tile Layers have finished up in this cottage. The initial taping/painting is finishing up and now doing a touch-up punch list. The Floor Layers are busy laying linoleum in the resident rooms, after having laid the kitchen and the dining room floors. Custom Cabinets installed counter tops in the Kitchen/Nurses Station/Medicine Room/ Resident Rooms. They also hung the kitchen swing half doors with new heavy-duty hinges. Electricians continue doing the trim-out of lights/switches/outlets. The Plumbers are installing the toilets/sinks/shower heads/fixtures in all the resident bathrooms as well as the kitchen/spa area. All the Mechanical Controls are up and running to the Mechanical System and this Cottage is self-heating. The Cleaners are dusting.

Cottage #3—Interior: Painters are painting all the resident bathroom ceilings with a white water-resistant epoxy paint. The bathroom walls between the ceiling and the top of the wall tile will be painted a different color of this water-resistant epoxy paint. John had a guy scrubbing/sanding the Mechanical/Janitor Rooms so they can be sealed. Custom Cabinets hung the kitchen swinging half-doors with the heavy-duty hinges. The Floor layers are about done and are part of the push to get Cottage #2 completed. Not really a lot left to do in this Cottage. The Floor Layers are mostly done in this Cottage and are concentrating on Cottage #2.

Exterior: The Siders sided the patio column and metal-sheathed the laminated roof support beam.

Cottage #4—Interior: Tapers are doing some finish-up taping. The painters have the 6 resident rooms on the East Wing painted. The walls are one color and the ceiling is another. The bathroom walls/ceiling will get painted with the water-resistant epoxy paint. The Plumbers were running gas pipe and working on zone valves.

Exterior: Columns were framed. The siders are working on siding the Columns and sheathing the laminated wood support beam.

Cottage #5—Interior: The Sheet-Rockers are sheet-rocking all the resident room ceilings and also the ceiling in the living room. Once the living room is sheet-rocked, the carpenters can come in and frame the coffered ceilings. All the inside of the exterior walls will be sheet-rocked, and one side of the interior walls will be sheet-rocked. Then the open side can be insulated, after which it will be sheet-rocked. The Sheetmetal guys installed the air-handlers in the corridors. Fire-taping the corridors continues. The Fire Suppression Fitters are starting to install their system by running pipe and installing sprinkler-heads.

Exterior: The Siders finished the soffit/facia and have the rain-gutters left as well as siding the Front Entry columns. The Patio Columns and laminated roof-support beam will follow.

Maintenance/Receiving Building: The sheet-rock taping is in progress. Once that's done it will get painted. The Carpenters are hanging interior doors. Once this is done the Electrician and Plumber can come in and complete their trim-out.

Outside: Because of the cold/snow, nothing is happening outside, other than the snow removal contractor plowing and shoveling snow.

There's a good chance that most, if not all, the Resident Veterans coming into the SW MT VET Home will have had their Covid-19 Vaccination. That would be a great thing. Hopefully all of you will be able to do the same. I get my 2nd one on Feb 12th which will be a relief. It's encouraging to see our Covid numbers coming down. Please be safe for not only yourself but especially your loved ones. Take care until next time.