

Southwest Montana Veterans Home. Update- #90

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 Veteran's Home.

Burr! Burr! The cold weather lion has come upon us with a roar! Fortunately, most of the outside work is close to being done. It did affect some of the workers who had cold weather home freeze-ups, and they had to stay at home and get things fixed. This did cause a worker shortage which then slowed down the work progress. Despite this, a lot of work is moving forward. Liaison Mark Gollinger and I did our weekly walk-through, which is always eye-opening and a good opportunity to visit the different Craftsmen/Workers. Mike Ascheman and John Kotka always give me their great up to date progress information.

Construction Updates:

Community Center/Cottage #1: Completed.

Cottage #2: The Plumbers are setting the toilets/sinks/faucets in the Resident Veteran bathrooms and will hook up the kitchen sink and dishwasher. The Electricians are close to finishing their trim-out of the lights/switches/outlets. They did pull a small amount of wire. The Carpenters have all the doors/hardware/trim done. They also have all the grab bars installed in every bathroom through-out this Cottage. All the TV brackets were installed followed by all the TVs being mounted on them. Each Resident room has a TV, as well as the Living Room and Den. John Kotka had one of his guys cleaning the cement floors in the Janitors/Mechanical Rooms, as those rooms will get a floor seal treatment. Painters are doing final touch-up before the inspectors come in and possibly create a punch-list to finish the final painting touch-up. The two Floor Layers are prepping floors and then laying the linoleum in each of the Resident Rooms. They should have that wrapped up this week. Johnson Controls are dialing-in the Air Handler damper controls, which controls the Heating System. Cleaners are scheduled to move into this Cottage at the end of the week, after the flooring is finished.

Cottage #3: The Carpenters moved into this Cottage, this week, and will finish installing the FF&E dispensers. They also will mount all the tv brackets and then mount the TVs. The Plumbers are installing the faucets in the Public Bathroom/Spa bathtub and kitchen. Electricians are finishing up their trim-out. The Painters may get in to do some touch-up painting. Johnson Controls are dialing-in the Air Handler damper controls, which control the Heating System. The Floor Layers have some carpet to lay. The cleaners will also be in this Cottage.

Cottage #4 Interior: The Plumbers are busy building Zone Valves and Manifolds for both Cottage #4 and Cottage #5, as well as running gas piping. The Carpenters are moving in to build window jams and do window casing trim-out. They will start cutting/nailing door casings and hang some of the doors. Tapers and painters continue doing their work. They have the East Wing finished out on the painting. Tapers are getting the final coat of mud applied in the west wing resident rooms/dining room/living room/den/kitchen, with the Painters following them to paint these rooms.

Exterior: The Siders are getting close to finishing the rain-gutters/soffit and column siding. The Patio area was the recipient of a lot of this work.

Cottage#5—Interior: Finally, a more concentration of work is taking place here. The Sheet-Rockers are sheet-rocking most of the lids (ceilings) and down some of the walls. Sheet-rocking one side of all the interior walls will be focused on soon, which will enable the insulators to insulate those walls before both sides are sheet-rocked. The Tri-County Sheetmetal guys were hanging the Air Handlers off their duct work. The Fire Suppression guys were roughing-in their piping for the sprinkler heads. The Carpenters framed the Coffered Soffits in the living room and are working on the front entry door.

Exterior: The Carpenters framed-out all the columns. The Siders are installing rain gutters. They will probably need to put heat tape in them, to keep the water from overflowing over them and forming heavy icicles that could cause gutter damage.

Maintenance/Receiving Building: Carpenters hung all the interior doors. The Tapers are applying the fire-tape and will follow-up with their mud application in preparation for texturing.

It's still a thorn in the side that our first Resident Veterans haven't been admitted to the SW MT VET Home. Sen Tester is trying to get to the bottom of the issue that is preventing it. The other bit of good news is HB-14 and HB-5, that we gave testimony on a couple of weeks ago concerning the covered walkways between our cottages, passed out of that Committee and is in the House Appropriations Committee! Hopefully the forward movement will continue.

Again, another bit of exciting news is concerning COVID-19 Vaccines. Ft Harrison is getting 600 Vaccines a week. 200 hundred of these vaccines are being sent to Billings and the rest Ft Harrison keeps. What they are doing with these is a combination of giving shots there and sending their medical personal to communities throughout Western Montana, to give the rest of the vaccinations out. Missoula was on their list this week. Butte will be getting 300 vaccines on Feb 22 and 28 days later those recipients will get their 2nd shot. Bruce Knutson, from Ft. Harrison, is coordinating the vaccinations to be given outside of Ft. Harrison. In all probability, the shots will be given at the American Legion Hall here in Butte. Veterans from Butte and the surrounding areas will be on the lists. The first recipients will start at 75 years old and older. If there's not enough in that age group to get the shot, then the age will drop to 70 or 65. Bruce says that the plan is to come to Butte 6 times, and hopefully get all the veterans on VA Health Care in this area vaccinated. It's my understanding that those who will get the shots will be called and given a time to come. It will be important to come at your appointment time to avoid a bottleneck.

Please be careful, stay warm and practice the safety protocol concerning the Covid-19. Until next time.