

# Southwest Montana Veterans Home Update #91

By Mike Lawson

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

Lent was on Wednesday, which means it's 40 days, not counting Sunday, to Easter and Spring. Warmer weather will be coming, and the ground thawing will be in process. Life will again come out of the ground and the landscaping at our Veterans Home will be in full force. The Cottages are looking beautiful as one drives by, but once the lawns are in it will set them off in an added beauty all of their own. The other event that will take place at about this same time is the building of the new Veteran's Medical Center. It's expected to open at some point this fall. With these two facilities, our "Veteran's Corner" in this part of Butte, will really be a plus for our SW MT Veterans to get to.

Getting back to our Vet Home, it was good to do my weekly walk-through of the facility with Liaison Mark Gollinger and get a first-hand view of the ongoing construction progress. More and more work is getting completed, especially with Cottage #2 & #3 coming to the end of their construction within the next couple of weeks. The excitement is always under the surface knowing Veterans will be making this their home soon. Mike Ascherman has all he can do to keep things coordinated but has a good man in John Kotka who is checking/keeping everyone on task. Both their professional input continues to be top notch and makes my efforts easier to accomplish in writing this update.

## Construction Updates:

**Community Center and Cottage #1** are completed and in control of the Management Contractor - Eduro.

**Cottage #2—Interior:** The Carpenters finished the installation of all the FF&E Dispensers and pushed all the appliances into place. The Electricians were/are hooking the kitchen appliances up. The Plumbers are finishing the sink/toilet/faucet trim-out. Painters are doing the final touch-up painting in preparation for the Architect's inspection on March 1<sup>st</sup>. The Floor-Layers finished all the linoleum, laid carpet in the Living Room/Den/Nurses Office and should do the Dining Room/Corridors this week. The Tri-County Sheetmetal/Johnson Control workers were adjusting all the Heat System Damper Controls. The Cleaners were doing pre-cleaning. This Cottage is very close to being done. It's all about the little finish completion work that takes more time than one would think.

**Cottage #3—Interior:** Not much going on here as the push has been on Cottage #2. Tri-County Sheetmetal/Johnson Control workers worked on adjusting the Heating System Damper Controls. The Cleaners were doing pre-cleaning.

**Cottage #4—Interior:** The Carpenters are trimming out windows in the Resident East Wing Rooms. Work on the exterior thresholds and seals continues. The Plumbers continue to pre-build all the zone valves/manifolds for both Cottages #4 & #5. They were also seen soldering water copper piping. The gas-line piping is installed. They will be moving into the Mechanical Room to assemble/install the manifolds/zone-valves. Painters will be back in this building, this week.

**Cottage #5—Interior:** A lot going on in this building now that the work in the other Cottages is winding down. The Carpenters have the coffered ceiling completely framed, and they installed the

panic-bar hardware on the exterior doors. This now allows this building to be completely locked down. The Sheet-Rockers are busy installing four different types of sheetrock. The White-Rock is a high impact rock that is the first 4' off the floor. The Dens Shield Rock is under all the bathroom tile on the walls. The Water Rock is above the tile. The Regular Sheetrock is above the 4' Dens-Shield Rock. These Sheet-Rockers have a lot left to do but are getting after it. The Sheet Metal guys are running ductwork into the Resident Rooms as well as working on the Air Exchangers. The Fire Suppression guys are installing pipe and setting up for the sprinkler head installation. The Electricians will be in this week to do more of their rough-in work. The Insulators should be in this week to blow insulation into the attic.

**Exterior:** The Siders installed most of the Rain Gutters, with heat tape on them to follow. They were also working on some of the soffits and putting on batten strips.

**Receiving/Maintenance Building:** The Tapers have it taped and textured. Painters are scheduled to paint it this week. Once this is done, the Electricians and Plumbers will do their trim-out work.

As you can see things are coming to a close in Cottages #2 & #3 and more work is being done in #4 & #5, which are probably a couple months from being completed (maybe a bit less). With this being said, there are some of us, who are exploring ways to get Cottage #6 to become a reality. Our hope is to possibly get private funding through a grant to fund/build it. Getting Federal/State Funding would be difficult and would take time. The way it could work with private funding if we could get the donated funds, is for the Southwest Montana Veteran Home Foundation to get the grant. Because the State of Montana owns all the Veteran's Homes, the Foundation would donate the funds to build Cottage #6, to the State. The State would then need to get permission from the Legislature, to use that money to build Cottage #6. That would probably not be an issue. We're in the beginning stages in exploring this option. We're looking for answers and would appreciate any thoughts you the readers might have. You can contact any of the Foundation Members who are located in our six counties of Powell/Deer Lodge/Beaver Head/Madison/Jefferson/Silver Bow. We, as Veterans, will look at all options to make the SW MT VET HOME complete as it was originally supposed to be with Six Cottages. The other bit of information concerning our Vet Home is that the funding for our covered walkways, between the cottages, is still alive in the Appropriations Committee, in the State House of Representatives. Hope upon hope this will go all the way and the building of these walkways will become a reality.

The last thing to mention is that this Thursday, the VA from Ft. Harrison will be bringing the Covid-19 Vaccination Team to the American Legion in Butte to give 300 hundred vaccines to Veterans who are 75 and older. These veterans will be from the surrounding areas, including Powell/Deer Lodge/Beaver Head Counties, the Jefferson Valley clear to Virginia City, as well as Butte. This is the first of as many trips that it will take to get all of our qualified veterans vaccinated. Bruce Knutson is coordinating vaccinations outside of Ft. Harrison and wants to get all veterans under the VA Healthcare system vaccinated. With that said, I'll close for now. Until next time.