

Southwest Montana Veterans Home. Update #95

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.

I can't express enough of the joy in seeing three resident veterans being admitted into our SW MT Vet Home this week! Finally, we are seeing real live veterans become residents after a decade-plus of making this Vet Home a reality! Two more veterans are scheduled to be admitted this week. The contracting operator of our Vet Home, EDURO, saw Brenna Anderson and her personnel open the doors of Cottage #1 to give these veterans a wonderful/warm welcome. The Governor and a crowd of Veterans lined the sidewalk of Cottage #1, giving the first Veteran to be admitted a welcome round of applause. The other two Veterans came at different times during the week and were greeted by Veterans who also gave them a warm Veteran's welcome. The Eduro staff have already expressed what wonderful guys the admitted resident vets are and are honored to take care of them. It's hoped that the Medicare Occupancy Inspection will quickly happen, and pass, this week. This will then open the door for a total of 22 Veterans to become residents.

I gave Governor Gianforte a tour of Cottage #2 and Cottage #5 with the help of Cory Markovich. Other Veterans of the SW MT Veteran's Foundation added their comments, which really made this a great informative tour for the Governor, his wife, and their staff. It was a snowy overcast morning which made it the perfect setting to point out the need for connected "Covered Walkways" between the Cottages. The House Bill is seeking the funding for these is in the Appropriations Committee. We need to keep our fingers crossed on this one! I also showed him where the Cottage #6 footprint was and explained it was shovel ready with all the utilities already there. He mentioned that Montana had a lot of Federal Money, so I'm hoping movement to build this cottage will be addressed in this Legislative Session and a bill will be introduced in making this happen. One can hope and dream!

The Markovich crew and their sub-contractors are really working hard to get one cottage at a time finished and turned over to the State. Cottage #2 is close, and Cottage #3 is right behind it. The expectation is that Resident Veterans will be admitted into these Cottages by the end of this month. This will be dependent on the Medicare Inspection of the first few Veterans admitted in Cottage #1, and then the VA Inspection of the first 22 Veterans admitted who will be in both Cottage #1 & #2. The VA will inspect every cottage when finished before allowing 12 Veterans to occupy it. Mike Ascheman and John Kotka are really seeing that things are being done right, so the inspectors are satisfied, and the state can take possession. I always, always thank them for their input that allows me to write these updates. The other guy that is under the gun on so many fronts, is the key person between the state and this Vet Home. He is Liaison Mark Gollinger. His vast experience with his career in the Navy SeaBees, having a master's degree and working with Veterans in the Job Service, is not to be taken lightly. We're privileged as Veterans to have one of our own working in our SW MT Veteran's Home, making sure things are running smoothly. If you see Mark, give him a big "Atta boy" for a job well done!

Construction Updates:

Community Center & Cottage #1 are complete and in control of the operating contractor EDURO.

Cottage #2: BSB Fire Alarm/Fire Sprinkler/Ansul-Hood tests passed with flying colors. The BSB of Occupancy Inspection passed and will be issued with the date of 3/10/21. Painters are close to finishing their final touch-ups from the architect's punch-list. The Electricians have all the lighting finished and have this Cottage 100% completed. Floor Layers have all the rubber base installed are finishing the entryway carpet, which will probably be finished when this article comes out this Wednesday. 360 Office Supply has brought-in and placed all the furniture throughout the building. The final architect inspection and minor punch-list should be completed this week and it is then expected to be turned over to the state. The Cleaners are doing fine

cleaning. Eduro is getting ready to stock and supply this Cottage in anticipation of Resident Veterans being admitted in the very near future.

Cottage #3: BSB Fire Alarm/Fire Sprinkler/Ansul-Hood tests passed with flying colors. BSB Certificate of Occupancy Inspection passed and will be issued with the date of 3/10/21.

The Floor-Layers finished the carpet and rubber base installation. Electricians are finishing the lighting and will be completely done. Painters are doing touch-up. Complete Communication is finishing the DataBase wiring. 360 Office Supply brought in the furniture and placed it through-out the building. Cleaners are doing the final cleaning. The architect inspection with minor punch-list should be completed this week and then this building will be turned over to the state.

Cottage #4: The Sheet-Rock Tapers are working on the Living Rm/Dining Rm/Nurse's Office/Pantry/Den/Spa. The Painters have the East Wing completely painted out. The North Wing resident rooms and the corridor are completely primed, with the ceilings being painted white and the bathroom walls with the prescribed colored paint. As the tapers finish up in the central portion of this building, the painters will follow to do this area's painting. The Carpenters are building window jambs, hanging doors, trimming out doors/windows. The Plumbers continue to work on zone-valve insulation in the mechanical room. The Tile-Layers have the tile laid in the East Wing bathrooms and will grout them this week. They'll then move into the North Wing bathrooms. ARJO completed installing all the patient lift systems in the resident rooms and the Spa Bathroom. The Electricians continue to pull wire.

Cottage #5: The Sheet-Rockers continue to hang sheetrock and the Sheetrock Tapers are fire-taping the high ceilings through-out the building. The Insulators have installed all the interior wall sound insulation and are completely finished on this Vet Home Project. The Electricians are caught-up for now.

Electrical Vault: Will be fire-taped this week. The Electricians will finish the trim-out of lights/outlets/switches.

Receiving/Maintenance Building: The Taping/Texturing/Painting are completed. The Plumbers are installing the overhead heaters and running gas piping to them. They also have plumbing fixtures to install. The Electricians will be trimming out the lights/outlets and switches.

Flagpole Electrical Change Order: This concerns new lighting to light up the flags at night-time. The Carpenters used ground-heaters to thaw the ground at the base of the flagpoles so Zemljak can dig a trench for the electrical conduit. Once this is done, the Electricians will run the conduit and wiring.

Things are moving pretty quickly, and you can just feel our Vet Home coming to completion in the not too distant future. We're working on some different ways to get the covered walkways to become a reality, and then also Cottage #6 to become a reality. We have to keep trying and never give up. On another front, the vaccination shots are becoming more available, so please get them. The VA will be back on March 24th to give the second shot to those of you who got yours at the American Legion Hall. I'll try and keep you posted as to when they'll come to give more vaccines to those 65 and under. Be safe, mask and distance so we can beat this virus and get back to a normal lifestyle again. Until next time.