

# Southwest Montana Veterans Home Update #98

**By Mike Lawson**

Greeting 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.

It's now springtime in the Rockies and here in Butte the days are getting warmer. The migratory birds, like the robins/bluebirds are starting to arrive. The buds on the trees/bushes/etc. are starting to appear and a tinge of green is appearing in our southern exposure areas. At the base of the East Ridge of Butte's section of the Continental Divide, we see the two new Veteran Facilities taking advantage of this better weather construction wise. The new Veteran IBOC Medical Center has seen renewed activity starting last week. I talked with Wayne Paffhausen, the owner/contractor, to get an update on this facility. I mentioned before that the foundation footing walls were in, the dirt was filled/compacted in and outside of these walls last fall. The plan to wait until spring when the ground thawed seemed to make the most sense, according to Wayne. The ground thawed and the work of digging the trenches for the sewer and water, is now taking place underneath where the flooring will be. Wayne said this should be done in April and then the cement floor can be poured. The framing will probably start toward the end of May. Hoffman Excavating is doing the dirt work. All the parking-lot will have the groundwork and graveling completed during this time period. The reasoning for this is that the carpenters will be able to utilize the use of a motorized construction lift to raise framed walls/etc. These lifts can be driven within two feet of the structure walls. Everything will be framed on site with the completion date being this fall. Drive by and watch the progress!

The SW MT Veteran's Home is still waiting for CMS to do their certification in order to bill and meet federal regulations. Then the VA will inspect every Cottage when finished, which will allow 12 resident veterans to be admitted. The state can't get reimbursed by the VA until after the Cottage has successfully passed the VA recognition survey. These are all accountability measures for the good and well-being of our Resident Veterans. I again thank my update "go to guys" Mike Ascheman, John Kotka and now Wayne Paffhausen at the VA IBOC Medical facility.

## **Vet Home construction updates:**

**Community Center, Cottage #1 and now Cottage #2** are finished and turned over to the state. The State then authorized the operating contractor "Eduro" to staff/supply and operate in these buildings. Markovich Construction does come in to fix anything that might need fixing as per warranty.

**Cottage #3:** All the punch-list work is completed except for the touch-ups by the Painters. Once they're done, the Cleaners will come in and do the final cleaning. This Cottage is very close to being turned over to the state.

**Cottage #4:** The Painters are priming and painting colors throughout this Cottage. The North and East Wings are now painted out. The Dining Room/Living Room/Nurses Office/Den/Kitchen are pretty well primed out and ready for colored painting. Plumbers continue tying in the Zone Valves. The Carpenters built window jambs and cased out windows in the North Wing. They built door jambs and are installing them this week in the North Wing resident rooms. In the East Wing Corridor, they installed the handrails and picture-rails. They also installed the bathroom

doors and casing on one side which will allow the Tilers to butt their tile against them. The Tilers are setting their tile on these East Wing bathroom walls.

**Cottage #5:** Sheet-Rockers continue hanging sheetrock in the resident rooms that have the seismograph T-Bar metal framework completely installed. The Tapers have all the fire taping completed. They're now taping all the butt-joints/horizontal-joints/inside-corners. This is in preparation for completing the 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> levels with the final 5<sup>th</sup> level skin coat application, followed by sanding. These walls have to end up being smooth and flat. The Plumbers continue to install their domestic water piping. The Electricians are installing the light-cans/wiring in the seismograph T-Bar ceiling framework in the resident rooms. This has to happen before the Sheet-rockers can hang their ceiling sheetrock.

**Electrical Vault:** The Tapers are finishing the final coats of mud which will then allow the painters to paint this small building to completion.

**Receiving/Maintenance Building:** The Fire Alarm System is being installed. This building isn't far from being turned over to the State.

Becker Landscaping: They're scheduled to be on site this week. They have a lot of work to do to make our Veteran Home grounds beautiful. They have a good reputation and I'm sure they'll do a great job.

The Legislature only has about a month left in this session and HB5 & HB14 are still alive. They're the Bills that concern the walkways and Cottage #6. Keeping our fingers crossed!

Another Veteran's point of interest is concerning the Marine's Toys for Tots Campaign. The latest 2020 figures for Montana are that there were 188,000 toys distributed to 46,500 of our Montana children. That equates to 4% of Montana's population. In Montana we have 16 TFT Campaigns. In our 6 Counties we have one in Deer Lodge, Anaconda, Dillion and Butte. Butte's TFT Campaign covers the area from Whitehall to Virginia City, Harrison, and Butte. We have point people in Harrison, Whitehall, and Twin Bridges, who take applications and deliver the toys. We put in a lot of hours but knowing the kids have a great Christmas makes it well worth it! All the Campaigns need volunteers, so next fall if any of you that want to give us a hand, it would be well appreciated.

Many, of us have been vaccinated and the Covid cases are going down. The restrictions are being lifted and our gathering together once again is a good thing. Continue to use common sense safety measures as we don't the numbers to go up again. Looking forward to the day that we can go into the SWMVH and visit our Resident Veterans there! Take care until next time.