

SOUTHWEST MONTANA REGIONAL VETERAN'S HOME UPDATE

BY MIKE LAWSON

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Greetings again to the veterans/communities of the 6 counties in SW Montana who organized and are part of our "Southwest Montana Regional Veterans Rest/Nursing Home being built in Butte. These articles, again are to help keep you updated on our Vet Home construction as it continued to progress. They will also address the different pieces of the puzzle that are involved in the big picture of our Vet Home, from start to completion, to running it once resident veterans are admitted. After giving you a "Site Update", I'll attempt to give you a brief explanation of the State of Montana's piece of the puzzle.

My "go to guy" Construction Superintendent Mike Ascheman said things are going well. Everything has to be coordinated with the different crafts doing their specialized part in the construction process. This past week the Carpenters finished forming and bracing the Community Building walls and cement will be poured this week. The cement has to cure a few days before the forms will be removed and Mike Zimlack's excavator Operators/Labors can fill in the dirt around the walls. Once that is done the Plummer's and Electricians can get their work done before a floor is poured. Everything has to be done in the right sequence. The footings for the first Cottage have been dug in the SW Corner along Blacktail Loop Road.

The footings should be built and possibly poured this week.

Two bits of good news just received. The first is that July 2nd is scheduled for our Veteran's Home "Groundbreaking Ceremony", which I hope many of you will attend. The second is the two cottages that were dropped, because of the cost increases over the ten years it took to finally get our Veteran's home started, have been awarded by the State of Montana to Markovich Construction. This happened because of the money appropriated from this year's Legislature to make up the difference needed to complete SW Mt Regional Veteran's Home as designed. We now will have a 60 Bed Facility. YES!!

The State of Montana has been an important piece of the puzzle from the beginning. In visiting with our state Sen Jon Sesso, he explained that the State through the Department of Public Health and Human Services submitted the Proposal for our Veteran's Home to the VA and through the years of our waiting was in close contact with the VA. Through the Department of Administration's "Division of Architecture and Engineering", all our Vet Home plans/drawings/etc, had to go through them, and be approved before being submitted to the VA. They are required to have an Engineer who is the "Site Liaison" for the State. The Liaison's job is to make sure the contractor builds according to plans and solve problems that might come up. Testing and submitting material tests is also another of his functions. Mike Ascheman said it best "He's my go to guy for questions and answers". Very important person to obtain the highest of quality control. This is just touching the surface of how the State of Montana is involved in making this a great Veteran's Rest Home.

Until next time, I hope you come and visit the site by going into the "Viewing Hooch", If we get a card table and chairs in there you might even see a card game going on. Take Care