

## Southwest Montana Regional Veteran's Home Update #3

By Mike Lawson

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Greetings again to you the veterans/communities of the 6 counties in SW Montana who organized the "Southwest Montana Regional Rest/Nursing Home" being built in Butte. In keeping with the intent of you being updated to the Vet Home construction progress as well as addressing the different pieces of the puzzle of how our Vet Home came to be, I'll do both.

This past week's construction progress is somewhat hard to gauge as I was unable to connect with Mike Ascherman (Vet Home Construction Superintendent). I saw different craftsmen working on the Community Building foundation walls, not sure if the walls were poured with cement. The excavator construction workers continue to do site preparation dirt work, like drainage ditches, leveling and compacting some of the cottage sites before digging footings and stockpiling a huge mountain of dirt on the east side of the property along Continental Drive. Things are happening for sure. In our "Viewing Hooch", so graciously provided for the veterans by Markovich Construction Company, we now have a table and chairs for any of you to sit and relax on, if you so desire. Some of us are ready to engage in a pinochle card game. It's just a good place to visit and gather to feel a connection with what's going on outside as our Vet Home is being built.

One of the puzzle pieces in the make-up of getting a location for the SW MT Vet's Home was in selection of a site for it to be built on. After the Legislation was passed and the Montana State's portion of money raised through the Tobacco Tax was in place, a "SW Montana Veteran's Home Selection Committee" was mandated and implemented through the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services. This Committee was made up of representatives from each of the 6 counties this Vet Home would represent, ( Jefferson, Madison, Beaver Head, Powell, Deer Lodge and Silver Bow) ,as well as state Representatives.. Each of these Counties would have a Veteran Committee who would then pick their Selection Committee Representatives. These Representatives would then be voting members of the Veteran's Selection Site Committee mandated by the state. Each County through their own committee would investigate and search for the best Vet Home Site within each of their counties, that they felt would be the best site for the SW Mt Vets Home to be built on. The criteria they were given to make this selection was decided on and voted on by them in their Selection Committee Meeting. Each of the Counties Committees input was taken by their Representatives to the Selection Committee. Once the criteria was decided upon and each county had picked a desired site, the Selection Committee then visited each county to hear their reasons as to why their site was the ideal place for the Veteran Home to be built. Each County was visited and went through this process. Once these visits were completed the Selection Committee met and tabulated all the information they had gathered and then voted on a site for our Veteran's Home. I'm sure it was not an easy choice as all the counties put a lot of work in before presenting each of their potential Sites. It was decided that Butte was the voted on site. Some veterans from the other counties were disappointed but in the end have accepted and support the Butte location. Their support is evidenced by each of their counties having equal representation on the Southwest Montana Regional Veteran's Home Foundation Board. The 6 counties working together through the foundation is very positive and is a "Vet Helping a Vet" relationship.

Hopefully this helps in the understanding of an important early piece of the puzzle that the Veterans in our 6 SW Mt Counties played an important part.

Until next time, take care and visit the "VET Home Viewing Hooch" located on Blacktail Loop just south of Three Bears.

Mike