

Southwest Montana Veterans Home Update #44

By, Mike Lawson

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

In spite of the stay-at-home order, by our Governor Bullock, the construction workers are making progress, in getting our Veteran Home built. In doing our weekly construction work progress visit, Construction Superintendent Mike Ascherman, said a lot of precautions are being taken to protect everyone, working on this site. With the different subcontractors working on the Community Center building, in the ending stages of construction, it's important to not have more than 6 or so people, working near each other, any given time. Mike has had to coordinate, the juggling of different contractors, to come in at separate times. Some are coming in on weekends, instead of during the week, or are also, working on other buildings, where work is available for them. The skeleton crews are still the norm. If anyone shows signs of being sick, they're sent home, and have to have a "Doctors Excuse", to return to work. It has worked out, that the ratio of guys working together, has been in, two to four member teams, being the norm. Hopefully these practices will allow the construction work to continue and keep everyone healthy. The other safety step, being taken, is the meeting between the architects, state engineers, state overseer's/liaison and general contractor, every three weeks, is being by a telecommunication conference call. So, for now, things continue to move forward, in this construction phase.

Construction Update:

Community Center Building: Interior; The finishing phases, continue with the Sheetmetal/Tinners continuing to get all their pieces of ductwork installed above, where the suspended ceiling will be. This ductwork is round and wrapped in an insulation blanket type material, that minimizes heat lost, as the warm air, from the furnace, travels to each room's heat register vent-outlets. The plumbers are finishing up on the boiler work. The sheetrock, mud and tape work is close to being done. The sprinkler fitter work, is done for now until ceiling is in. The other contract work is the Johnson Control Panels being wired and hooked up. All these contractors should be done this week, which will allow "Yellowstone Acoustic" to install the suspended "Ceiling Metal Framing System, throughout the building. This will then, be followed by the ceiling, sheet rock and acoustical panels being installed. In conjunction with this, the electricians will install their drop light ceiling panels. The other ceiling panels installed will be the HVAC (heating) ceiling grills. Mike said the painters will come, in about three weeks, to paint, and once they're done, the tile and floor guys will tile, in the bathrooms and then get the flooring installed. The carpenter finish framers will be doing all the trim around the doors, windows, etc., another time-consuming job. Check out the latest pictures on our Vet Home Web Site, of this building, as they're impressive.

Exterior; The siding crew is continuing to put the siding on. It's going to be two colors and the contrast between them, is going to be beautiful, once it's done.

Cottage #1: Interior: The Sheetrock guys are busy, nailing sheet rock up on the Lid. There's a lot of it to do, and when we walked through this building, they had two, two-man teams working together. They have a lot of work ahead of them, and sheet rocking, is time consuming and hard work. No other crafts are in this building, until the sheetrock is completely nailed-up, on the Lid.

Exterior; The 3M Air-Barrier Peel and Stick, material application, is about done, followed by, all the windows and door frames being installed. The last of the blue foam insulation panel installation, is expected to be done this week, on the south side of this building.

Cottage #2: The electricians, are the main one's working in this building, along with a couple of sheet-metal workers, working on the HVAC ductwork. Lots of parts and pieces, for both trades, to be installed here.

Cottage #3: A lot of "pick-up framing", consisting of blocking, backing and soffits. The plumbers are doing they're rough-in plumbing, mainly, in the walls.

Exterior; The roof is still being roofed, by one lone roofer. He does a great job and the roof looks good. Expecting it to be done this week.

Cottage #4: The exterior walls are standing, with the ongoing work, of the bump-outs/bay-windows, being framed. Interior Walls are being framed and will be tipped/raised up, as they're built. The trusses for the building wings, which are on site, should be rolled up into place, by the end of this week. The "Common Area" trusses will hopefully, be rolled up into place, in a week or so, when they are delivered, to the Vet Home Construction Site. Seeing these walls go up, really drives home, how far things have come, and that there's only one Cottage left, for this construction phase to be repeated on.

Cottage #5: After continuing to report, that everything has been on hold here, I'm happy to report that General Foreman John Kotka, has started to snap, layout lines for the exterior and interior walls. John's always thinking ahead, and this is a great move. When Cottage #4's walls and roof are in place, the move to Cottage #5, will be a smooth transition.

I have to say, that doing a walk-through of our Veteran's Home Site, it is always an eye opener, as to the complexity of all the parts it takes to build one of these buildings. Shoddy work is not an option, as the "Building Standards" are strict, and the inspections are frequent. The quality of workmanship is excellent, as these Craftsmen are experienced and proud of the work, they put out. The on-the-job supervision, of Site Superintendent Mike Ascheman, General Foreman John Kotka and the other sub-contractor foremen, is vital to the big picture, of all the T's being crossed and I's being dotted. They do a good job, doing this. Another part of this picture, is our SW MT Vet Home Liaison Mark Gollinger, who keeps an eye on the construction, takes pictures,(both Drone and Camera), and keeps the communication line open, between the State of Montana (the owner) and the contractor,(Markovich), as it's being built. Once the Vet Home is built, Mark will continue keeping that line of communication open. The difference is, it will then be with the contractor, who will run this veteran facility. This is all about quality and quality control, now and into the future. After all these years of SW MT. Veterans and Communities, fighting to get this Vet Home to become a reality, we're now seeing the fruits of our efforts, taking place before our very own eyes. We have the blessed assurance, that it's being done, with high standards, being practiced. This SW MT Veteran Home is going to be, the showcase of Veteran Homes. Our Veterans living here, will have a wonderful home, to live out their days in, for sure. I'll close for now, with a reminder to you, too visit our SW MT Veteran's home website, (SWMVH.Mt.GOV), and see the Drone/Camera pictures, read the different articles, download applications to be in this Veteran's Home, as well as any updates the State of Montana, might put out.

Everyone be very careful and help each other, in getting through this time of crisis. Best of wishes.