

Southwest Montana Veterans Home Update #45

By, Mike Lawson

Greetings 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.

This week, we were blessed with mostly beautiful weather, for our construction crews to work in. The crews were not fully manned, but, even so, are doing a great job, with who are there. A lot of sub-contractors are doing the specialty parts of the construction. They consist of the Plummer's, Electricians, Sheetmetal Workers, Glazers (Windows), Sprinkler Fitters, Sheet Rockers/Tapers, Siding Workers, Excavators, Roofers, Johnson Control Installers and the General Contractor - Framers/Labors/Operators. The whole point of this list is to point out all the different Construction Building Trade Skilled Workers, who are needed to put this building puzzle, of our SW Mt. Vet Home, together. It's absolutely amazing to see them all working side by side, each doing their sequence of work. When the other sequences of work, before them, are completed to a point, then they can begin their work. It's crucial that the coordination of all these puzzle pieces of construction, are done in the right format/order. This falls on the shoulders of Site Construction Superintendent Mike Ascheman, and if not done correctly, could bankrupt a job. Mike's good at what he does, and this job is running, smooth as silk. He has General Foreman John Kotka, keeping the framing of the building, with all his punch lists, on track. The heart and soul of these buildings are the framers doing things correctly, so when the sub-contractor workers come into these buildings, there's no worries and they can do their part of the construction puzzle. I visited with both Mike Ascheman and John Kotka and got a good update of this week's progress, from them. I also was fortunate to do a walk-through of our Vet home, with Liaison Mark Gollinger. This eyes-on experience really drives home the progress taking place, on the difference buildings. It also gives a vision of the breath-taking-beauty, of these buildings, when finished. The many years of battling for this SW MT Vet. Home to become a reality, is becoming more than I could ever have imagined.

Construction Update:

Community Center Building; Interior: The "Finishing Phase" portion of work continues and will continue, for probably another month. Every week, when walking through this building, a more complete picture is emerging of how it will look, when finished. The Sheet Rock "Tapers" have one more coating of mud to apply and then the painting can take place. They were finishing the fire taping, where the walls meet the lid, which is according to the fire codes. The Sheet Metal Workers, which we affectionally call the "Tin Benders", continue with their Heating Duct-Work. Probably another week for them, and then they'll come back when the ceilings are in. The Suspended Ceiling Metal Framing will now be ready to be installed, as well as the framing for those rooms that will get a sheetrock ceiling.

Exterior: The siding crew could only work for a day, this week, as other off-site jobs needed to be finished. The S&H Contractor told Mike Ascheman, he would have 6 to 8 siders working on site, this week. There's enough siding up on the south side of this building, to really give one an idea of what the finished building will look like. It will be impressive, with the two-color scheme being put on. Once they're done on this building, they'll move right over to Cottage #1. Another thing that happened here is Butte Glass installing the Store Front Windows and Entrance Doors. This alone is giving a more finished look to this building. This building now has water hooked up, for the Main Water System, as well as for the Fire Suppression Sprinkler System. The Butte Fire Marshall Inspected and signed off on the Fire Suppression Sprinkler System and water samples were taken on the main water system, to be tested.

Cottage #1: Interior; Some Sheet Metal" VAV Heating Duct" work, being done here, but it's mainly a Sheet Rockers Party. These Rockers are working through the week and the weekend. The insulators finished the insulation of the Lid and Exterior walls, with the plastic vapor- barrier

over that. This then allowed the sheet rocking phase to take place. The amount of sheet rock that goes into these buildings, is phenomenal. The inside of the exterior walls will all get sheet-rocked. One side of the interior walls will be sheet-rocked, which will allow the insulators to put sound barrier insulation against that sheet-rocked side. The rockers will then sheet-rock over that, followed by the sheet-rock tapers who will then mud and tape the seams and nail heads.

Exterior: All the windows are installed and all the exterior door frames are installed. All the 3M Peel and Stick Air Barrier material is applied, with the insulation blue foam board installed over that, on all sides except the south side. The blue board on this side, is scheduled to be put up, this week. Once this is done, the siding crew working on the Community Center, can move over and do the siding on this building.

Cottage #2: Interior: The Electricians are the main ones working. Lots of conduit/wiring/outlets/etc., being installed and run in the wall/ceilings. Again, the magnitude of the amount of the wiring and all the electrical components, that are part of each of these buildings, is beyond imagination. These buildings are what I would call, master pieces. Another thing that happened here, as well as in Cottage #1, Cottage #3 and Community Center, was the pouring of cement for "Cement Pads" on the floors of each of the mechanical rooms. These pads were poured to an elevation above the existing floor, of about 4 inches. The reason for this is to get the mechanical components, such as the furnaces/exchange units/etc., off the floor, in case of leaking/flooding. Another quality control to prevent damage to these units.

Exterior: All the exterior metal door frames are to be installed this week.

Cottage #3: Roofing is completed. Exterior eyebrows are scheduled to be framed. These are framed to project out, about 2 to 3 ft., above the big windows to shade them from the sun. The term "eyebrow" makes sense.

Cottage #4: The shortage of framers and having to pull some framers off this Cottage to work on Cottage #5, has put the rolling of the wing trusses behind a week. Some of the interior walls did get framed and raised up. Mike and John both told me these trusses will be rolled up into place this week. The Bump Outs/Bay Windows are also, being framed.

Cottage #5: Zemljak Excavating, dug the dirt away from the outside of this Cottage's footings, which then allowed the carpenters to paint the sides with a black water-resistant coating. Following this was the application, of attaching the cement insulation foam board over this coating. This process was completed and backfilled on three sides and the unfinished side, will be completed this week. General Foreman John Kotka will then send these carpenters, back to framing on Cottage #4. He also wants to layout and snap lines for the interior walls of this Cottage #5.

Not a lot to report on the state level, this week. The SW MT Vet Home Foundation will be judging the entries, for the Logo Contest, in the very near future. We'll publish the results, once that process is completed. I hope your Easter was good and am praying for this crisis to come to an end, with a cure/vaccine. Until then, stay safe and follow the directives to stay healthy, so we can overcome this crisis. Take care.