

# Southwest Montana Veterans Home Update #54

By Mike Lawson

Those many of us who have been in the military are very familiar with the term marching, as we did a lot of it in Boot Camp. The Contractors and Construction Workers continue their marching, toward getting our SW MT Vet Home completed and ready for the 2020 Veteran's Day Grand Opening on November 11, 2020. As this march gets closer to that end goal, the expectation and excitement, continues to build for many of us, who for 10 plus years have fought for this "**Veteran Dream**", that is now a "**seeing is believing**" reality. The political aspect continues to be part of the process and will become alive again, for the next push in getting Cottage 6, (which has always been on the overall construction drawings), to become a reality. If in fact we can persuade the powers to be, to make this happen, our Southwest Montana Veterans' Home will then be complete, as originally envisioned. With the new VA Medical Center going in, by Three Bears, this small section of Butte, right off the last I-90 East Exit, will become the easy-to-get-too "Veteran Center" for the Veterans of Southwest Montana. Marching on with this update, I again had great input with Construction Superintendent Mike Ascherman and Carpenter General Foreman Kotka. Liaison Mark Gollinger and I also did a walk-through of the site.

## Construction Updates:

Community Center: **Interior:** No carpenters worked in this building, this past week, as most were on the roof truss roll-up on Cottage #5. The other crafts continue to work on the finishing stages of construction, involving their particular work. The sheetrock crew installed all the ceiling T-Bar metal-framing grid and are sheet rocking those sections that require the seismograph ceilings. This won't take long and will include the mud and taping process. Johnson Controls are busy putting the controls in. An example of this, was noticing thermostats installed, in many of the rooms. The sheetmetal guys and electricians continue to install the ceiling lights cans and Heating/AC vents. GF John Kotka might have some carpenters doing door/window trim work this week.

**Cottage #1: Interior:** The Sheet-rockers continue to work on the Mud/Taping process. The ceiling Metal T-Bar Grid framing has been started. The Plumbers and Sheetmetal guys working on the Piping/boiler and HVAC system, are close to wrapping up this phase of their work. Insulation of pipe/ductwork/controls/etc continues. Knowing deadlines are coming in a few short months, Mike Ascherman keeps on top of getting things done, by the different craft/contractors, in a specified timeframe, so no bottlenecks cause work stoppages, for the other phases of construction that follow.

**Exterior:** The siding crew continues to side this building and the outside appearance continues to become more finished looking. Come and check it out, from the Blacktail Loop side.

**Cottage #2: Interior:** The sheet-rockers continue to hang sheetrock. The insulators have all the interior wall sound barrier insulation in place, which now allows the sheetrock to be hung on that side of the walls. Ductwork and control systems continue to be insulated. The Plumbers are working on their piping rough-in and the Sheetmetal guys are working on the HVAC rough-in. The Carpenters are working on the coffered ceiling soffit framing.

**Exterior:** Other than a bit of soffit framing finish work, completed on this building's entryway, this Cottage is now ready for siding.

**Cottage #3: Interior:** The big picture here, is that the Sheet-rockers are moving rapidly, in hanging the sheetrock. The Plumbers continue working on their rough-in piping. The Sheetmetal guys are working on the many components, like ductwork, that make up the HVAC system.

**Exterior:** The Carpenters are applying the 3M Vapor Barrier, following this with the blue foam insulation board and window installation. This is moving fast and if not completed this week, it should be completed next week.

**Cottage #4: Interior:** The main craft working in this building are the Electricians, who are "going to town" on their rough-in of wiring/electrical box/conduit installations. The Carpenters are doing a little on the backing/blocking framework.

**Exterior:** Roofing is completed.

**Cottage #5:** This was the big concentration for the Carpenters, as they rolled up the rest of the Roof-Trusses and have a lot of the fire-treated roof plywood sheeting, nailed down. With this being the last scheduled Cottage to be built, it really brings into focus of just how far this construction, of our Vet Home has come.

**Site:** Electricians continue to work on getting electricity work done, that will get electricity from the electrical Vault Building to each of the Cottages. Zemlijak Excavating did some grade work on the site's westside, in getting ready for sidewalks. They will also be digging for the Maintenance/Receiving Building's footing, which the Carpenters will then frame. The other issue that was mentioned from the last week's update, was the parking for the construction workers. The dirt work work/etc.... was progressing and parked vehicles, on the site, were in the way. Mike was able to get with Lynn Harrington, from the Harrington family, who donated the land for of Vet Home and owns the property north of the Vet home. Lynn gave him permission to put in a construction worker parking area. Many thanks, Lynn. Zemlijak Excavating, then, graded an area for parking. From now on the construction workers, will park outside the fence, in this designated parking area. A week from Monday, the day after Father's Day, Steed Construction is scheduled to pour the floors for the Maintenance Building, the Electric Vault Building and the Well House Building.

The State continues to work on the metrics of figuring who will be operating our SWMVH. Shaunda Hildebrand sent me a link that videoed a parade, that the Columbia Falls area folks put on, that went through the Columbia Falls Veterans Home Campus. The Veterans were sitting outside and were very appreciative. What a wonderful tribute to those Veterans by the folks in that area. I can envision these types of activities, from the different communities/groups in SW MT., taking place at our Southwest Montana Veteran's Home. This is a good thought to leave you with. Wishing you all the best, please practice safety, with respect for one another. Until next time.