

Southwest Montana Veteran's Home Update #69

By Mike Lawson

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

So many pieces of our Veterans Home are so close to coming together, on this march to get this complex of the 5 Resident Cottages, the Community Center and other lesser status building completed by the end of 2020. Getting the gas brought in by Northwest Energy as well as getting the electricity turned on, is crucial at this phase of the construction. In fairness to Northwestern, they have only so many folks that can do these hook-ups. This is the season that a lot of construction is taking place whose contractors need NW's services. Everyone is on a waiting list and our Vet Home is close, for their arrival. When I was in the "Viewing Hooch" I was able to see the Locater marking lines on the ground outside the gate as well as inside up through the driveway, etc. These paint lines identify where the underground water/sewer/storm drain lines as well as electric cables are buried. This is a good indication that Northwestern Energy is on tract to be on site, this week. Site Superintendent Mike Ascherman was assured they would be here on Monday of this week and hopefully turned on by Friday, getting the gas and electricity turned on, once North Western gets their installation work done, is going to be huge in propelling forward progress to making our Vet Home Site complete. As always Mike Ascherman and John Kotka gave me great Info on what has happened this past week and what is expected to happen this week. Mark Gollinger and I had a great walk-through, last Thursday, of all the Cottages and the Community Center. We always leave feeling the upbeat of the seeable progress that has taken place.

Construction Updates:

Community Center: — Interior: The flooring is on hold until the heat is hooked -up and turned on. The Plumbers have the sinks, urinal installed with most of the fixtures for them also installed. Most of the missing door hardware arrived and was installed. Once the gas/electricity is into this building and turned on, the finish work will move quickly.

Exterior: The siding is close to being wrapped up and looks good. The two patios and the back of the building sidewalks are prepped and ready for the cement finishers to make cement pours.

Cottage #1: —Interior: Everything is happening in this building, concerning finish work. The tile guys are about done with the tile grouting, John Kotka's guys have the door trim mostly done and the beauty of this trim really adds an accent to both inside and outside of all the rooms. His guys also installed the bathroom accessories which includes the grab bars in the showers and toilet areas, the towel bar/rings, the fold down grab bars on each side of the toilets and the soap dispensers. These are all stainless steel and really look striking, mounted on the tile walls. The Crown Molding on the Coffered Ceiling adds to the beauty in the living room. John also said that his guys have all the pantry shelves installed. Custom Cabinets, out of Great Falls, has been installing counter tops on the cabinets as well as starting to put the Corian Lunch Countertop on. This surrounds three sides of the kitchen area. These three wall sides are about four feet high and if the residents want to, they will have the option of eating at this countertop. In the next week or so, this Cottage will be ready for the floor layers.

Exterior: The Carpenters have the outside entry column posts trimmed out. The cement finishers are starting to get their forms built for some of the three-foot sidewalks going from the Cottage to the five-foot sidewalk running along the curb.

Cottage #2: —Interior: The taping/mud process is ongoing. Plumbers were working here for a short time, but the other cottage work was taking most of their time. The Electricians were working on Cam Lights.

Exterior: The Carpenters were framing the entryway column posts and handrail. The siders have a little bit of fascia left but the rest of the siding is done.

Cottage #3: —Interior: The Carpenters moved into this cottage and are setting doors. The FRP paneling is completely installed. The painters were scheduled to paint the inside of this cottage this past weekend. The Sheetrock Tapers had some fire taping to finish up. The Sheetmetal guys and Plumbers were in and out doing their prospective work.

Exterior: This was a siders show. The siding is coming along nicely, as Mike Ascherman puts it. It is looking good.

Cottage #4: —Interior: The sheetrock is ready to be taped. Fire-taping is done. The FRP Paneling is all installed. The metal attic access latter in the janitor's room is installed. Plumbers working on their piping and the Sheetmetal guys working on the HVAC System, were doing their ongoing work. The insulation of the mechanical components is ongoing. This building is coming together.

Exterior: The siders are working on the trim. Becker Landscaping is on the job and is starting to lay the sprinkler lines around this building.

Cottage #5: —Interior: The Electricians, Plumbers and to some degree the Sheetmetal guys are doing more rough-in work in this Cottage.

Exterior: Nothing at this time.

Maintenance Building: The siders have started siding this building. It will be the same red color as the Community Center.

In the next couple of weeks, things will really look different as the paving should be done or taking place, once the gas line is in. Most of the dirt work that Zemlijak Excavating is doing, will be done. Becker Landscaping will be getting a good start on the landscaping and the Community Center will be very close to being done if the floor layers have heat/electricity to lay their flooring. The excitement builds.

Liaison Mark Gollinger has most of the material he has ordered in his big locked container and is running out of room. A very generous donation of sixty televisions were donated, With one for each resident's room. A year from now our SW Vet Home should be running on all cylinders and we'll be pushing for Cottage #6 to be built and the connecting covered walkways connecting one Cottage to another. It'll take going to our Legislators when they meet in Helena and plead our case for the state funding to get this done.

The Southwest Montana Veteran Home Foundation met on September 14th. The Grand Opening is still in the discussion stages with November 11 still being the date for this. With Covid-19 being such a health factor, the logistics are a big challenge. As more is released, I'll let you know.

On another note, I visited Wayne Paffhausen, this past week. He is the contractor/developer who is going the build the new VA Medical Center, in the field on the south side of the Harley Davison Dealership. He expects to break ground with-in the next couple of weeks and wants to get the shell up before the snow comes to stay. This will allow work to be done out of the outside weather. He showed me a conceptual drawing of it and it also is going to look great. What a great location for our in-town and out-of town veterans to have easy access to.

I'll go for now with again asking you to be safe by distancing, wearing masks and keep your gatherings small. Montana is seeing a rise in Covid-19 cases and we want to see those numbers go down, especially in keeping our older folks out of harm's way. Visit the "Viewing Hooch" and relax while watching the construction activity take place. Take care until next time.