

# Southwest Montana Veterans Home Update #72

By Mike Lawson

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

This past week has been very busy, with the Governors visit and the frantic push to get the asphalt and cement work progressing. The concern with our cooler Fall weather, is what this push is about. As I mentioned in our last week's update, I had the privilege of conducting a tour of our Veteran's Home for Governor Bullock, Lt. Gov. Cooney, DPHHS Director Sheila Hogan, DPHHS Div Administrator Barb Smith, SLTC FNSB Chief Shaunda Hildebrand (all from Helena) and Veterans/friends from our six SW MT Counties. The Governor and everyone there, whom, I visited with, were amazed and impressed at the beauty and quality of the two buildings we toured. It was great to have Cory Markovich, from General Contractor Markovich Construction, there, to answer questions concerning the construction of the SW MT Veteran's Home. This was a great fact finding/sight-seeing event, for all concerned, leaving a very positive impression of where this Vet Home is at and where it is going.

With the Covid-19 delaying material arrival, waiting on change orders from the Engineering/Architecture folks, sub-contractor issues like the NW Energy getting the gas/electrical lines to the site and hooked up in a timely manner, (NW-overloaded with work and do things off list), with the start-up folks waiting in the wings, to come in and make sure everything works as expected, the date for opening Cottage #1 for admitting Veteran Residents is being delayed until Dec 22, 2020. Cory Markovich assured me, he'll do all he can to shorten that delay. Things have to be done right and we as Veterans know the drill "Hurry up and wait" means be patient as the final outcome will be worth it.

I always want to give thanks to the two guys, Site Const. Supt. Mike Ascheman and Carpenter Gen. Foreman John Kotka, who give me such great feedback on the past week's construction and what the expectation of the next week is going to be. Thanks guys.

## Construction Updates:

**Community Center: — Interior:** The floor-layers continue to work on flooring. The Electricians have finally gotten answers back from the Engineering/Architect folks with change order issues concerning proper breakers for heating units, etc.. they were running conduit from breaker panels to these units, finishing up the hook-ups for the mechanical systems as well as setting lights. John had one of his carpenters set the hood for the range in the warming kitchen. The Plumbers got the sinks, they were waiting for come in. Hopefully this coming week will see them in this building to finish-up. Lots for them to do in the Cottages, to take up their time.

**Exterior:** The Siding is completed. The Cement Finishers are working on a step and the 3' sidewalk from a side door in front of this building.

**Cottage #1:** The beauty of this building is really showing and it being part of the tour, was a real eye-opener for this group who saw it. The Spa Tub was installed, which is an incredible addition for the residents who use it. It has a one-inch water one to it, and once the resident is wheeled into it (special wheelchair). It will fill up/empty out in ninety seconds at the right temperature, so the veteran isn't shocked by a sudden temperature change. Just another top-quality feature continually being seen in our Veteran's Home Construction. Still a small bit of tile work to complete, that is expected to be done this week. John is still waiting for a few doors and door jams to come in. Once here it'll be a quick install. Plumber has been doing a bit of trim-out work.

**Exterior:** Completed other than a bit of entry way trimming.

**Cottage #2: — Interior:** Sheetrock tapers are taping. Plumbers are working on rough-in work.

**Exterior:** Nothing

**Cottage #3: — Interior:** Big concentration of work happening in this Cottage #3 with the expectation that in a couple of weeks it will be where Cottage #1 is now. The tile layers are working in the bathrooms (very labor intensive). The Carpenters have kicked out a lot of work. All the Bay Windows were trimmed out, All the bathroom doors have been hung, Shelving in the Laundry wet/ and dry rooms were installed. The Resident Hallways hand rail and picture rail was installed, This week will see the crew from the Cabinet Shop in Great Falls, installing cabinets and counter-tops. The Plumbers are working in the mechanical room.

**Exterior:** Nothing

**Cottage #4: — Interior:** Metal ceiling framework being installed. The HVAC, Plumbing Controls installation continues as well as the mechanical insulation.

**Exterior:** Siders were putting on more of the colored portion of the siding.

**Cottage #5: — Interior:** Electricians and Plumbers are continuing their rough-in. The sheet-metal guys did some work but for now are caught up and on hold until the construction gets further along, for them to come back.

**Exterior:** The siders may very well start siding this week.

**Outside Site Work:** Again, as was the case last week, as you drive by or go into the “Viewing Hooch”, you see all kinds of activity going on. Mike Zemlijak and his excavating crew are everywhere, doing dirt work/gravel prep for the sidewalks/garbage collection pad/curbs. They also excavated/brought to the proper grade levels, then put the gravel base in, followed by compacting it, for the driveway going from Blacktail Loop Road into this Vet Site Facility. The Cement Finishers are scrambling to get sidewalks and curbs formed and poured, before it gets too cold and they have to put heat blankets down to keep the ground warm for their cement to cure properly. Hoffman is scheduled to pave the West Parking Lot this week. They already did the East Parking Lot. The gas line tie-in to Blacktail Loop Road and to all the buildings is complete. The push is to get NW Energy to install the gas meters, which will enable the heating systems for each building to be turned on. The Irrigation Well is functioning and the Pump House is in place. Most of this outside work, will be of a much lesser degree in a couple of weeks, other than Becker Landscaping doing their work, which is considerable.

#### **Off-Site Interests:**

The VA Medical IBOC groundwork is well underway. It's in the field next to and directly south of the Harley Davison Dealership. Very close to our Vet Home and easy access to the Interstate. The other bit of information is how well the Veteran's portion of Stodden Park is coming along. The tall Flag Pole is up, the Amphitheater has been roofed with a metal roof, the cement work is finished and Becker Landscaping has started working there. It's now getting the wiring and lighting installed. Check it out, if you get a chance.

The election is coming up and the mail-in ballots are sent. Please vote as that's our right that we have as Americans. Our Covid-19 numbers are raising at a frightening rate in Montana, at this time. Please follow the safety guidelines to combat this virus and hopefully those numbers will come down.

Stay warm and take care until next time.