



PAVING THE WAY

Veterans Homes Construction Update

Building Opportunities for Michigan's Veterans

Summer may be winding down, but construction at the two new veterans homes in Grand Rapids and Chesterfield Township is going full-steam.

On recent visits to the homes, construction crews – several of them veterans themselves – were hard at work putting up walls and moving piles of dirt as they prepared to pour foundations and parking lots. These projects, they know, represent so much more than just bricks and concrete.

“What we’re building here are opportunities for veterans to experience freedom and independent living in a home-like setting,” said Mike Hassan, Project Manager for the Michigan Veterans Facility Authority and an Air Force veteran.

Hassan said the homes, which represent a combined state and federal investment of about nearly \$140 million, are on schedule to be completed and opened by mid 2021.

Each site will house 128 members in four home-like neighborhood buildings. Measuring over 29,000 square feet, each neighborhood building will include 32 resident rooms outfitted with private bedrooms and bathrooms, new furniture and amenities of a modern facility. Each neighborhood building will have a shared kitchen, dining facilities and living spaces.

The four neighborhood buildings will surround a 33,000-square-foot community center. The community center will house administrative offices, occupational and physical therapy spaces and amenities that include a multi-faith prayer room, café



(Top photo) An overhead look at the foundation of one of the four new neighborhood buildings at the project site in Grand Rapids. (Bottom photo) David Kopiczko (center), Senior Project Superintendent with The Christman Company, discusses the progress being made at the project site in Chesterfield Township.



and bistro, multipurpose rooms, barbershop, beauty parlor and large space for full membership and community gatherings.

The buildings will all be connected via heated and air conditioned corridors, allowing members to move through the neighborhood buildings and community center while staying indoors.

The surrounding grounds will be designed for additional recreation and exercise opportunities with landscaped walking paths and gardens.



The New Grand Rapids Home for Veterans

Construction Overview:

Throughout the construction phase, GRHV facilities will remain operational. However, there will be periods where parking lots and entrances will be closed:

- **Phase III (July 2019 - January 2021):** The north entrance will be closed for the remaining construction period. Visitors and staff are to use the south entrance and new driveway in front of the McLeish Building.

Current Activities:

- Building pads and utility work continues
- All demolition is essentially completed including Rankin building
- Completed foundation on two of the neighborhood buildings and community center and started on remaining buildings
- Completed milling of East staff parking lot
- Working on a new driveway
- Started storm water detention area

TIMELINE FOR CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW GRHV

2019:

- **September:** Site work, utilities, foundation
- **October:** Building pads, wall panels, retention walls
- **November:** Erecting exterior walls, storm water detention
- **December:** Structural steel and roof

2020: Construction continues

2021:

- **Spring:** Anticipated construction completion and certification survey period
- **Summer/Fall:** Facility open for full occupancy



GRHV member **Lee Walton** (right) discusses the progress being made at the construction site of the new home with RN **Jim Chapin** from the 3rd floor viewing area.

Lee's Lookout

Meet **Lee Walton**, an Air Force veteran and resident of the GRHV. If you want to know what's happening with the construction at GRHV, Lee's the one to ask. Lee, who previously worked in the construction field, loves to watch the progress of the new home construction. Most days,

he can be found in the laundry room on the 3rd floor which has been transformed into a construction viewing area. Lee says he likes watching the work come together and he loves to point out new progress to others.

When asked what he's looking forward to most when the new homes open, Lee stated that he's excited to have his own private living space.

Frequently Asked Questions:

How is construction of the new veterans homes being funded?

MVAA applied to the VA Home Construction Grant Program to fund construction of new veterans homes in Grand Rapids and southeast Michigan. As part of the grant application, the state of Michigan agreed to a 35 percent funding match for the project.

In 2017, the VA authorized \$88 million (65 percent federal contribution) in grant funding for the two projects. The Michigan Legislature provided \$49 million (35 percent state contribution) in funds toward the total construction project cost of \$137 million.

Will there be designated smoking areas in the new homes?

Yes. The MVFA Board and Michigan Legislature expressed a desire for the new homes to accommodate members who wish to smoke. Per the request of the MVFA Board, proposed smoking policies for the new homes are being drafted and

will be formally considered by the Board prior to the new facilities opening.

How does one apply to live at the new homes?

Grand Rapids — The home will continue to take applications for skilled nursing, memory care, dementia care and domiciliary. As beds become available, applications will be reviewed, and members will be welcomed into the home based on the availability of a room that meets their requested placement and care requirements. Application materials can be found at michiganveterans.com.

Southeast Michigan — An official waitlist for admission is not available since the facility will not open until 2021. However, anyone interested in more information is encouraged to send an email to MI-VeteransHomes@michigan.gov. They will be provided with newsletters and construction updates which will indicate when an official member waitlist is available.



Southeast Michigan Veterans Home

Construction Overview:

Construction on the new home for veterans in Chesterfield Township is well underway and the site is really starting to take shape.

Current Activities:

- Working on Ring Road subbase/pouring curb and gutter
- Installing plumbing and electrical underground in community center and NE neighborhood building
- Sanitary and Storm sewer/water main work almost complete
- Completed masonry walls for NE, SE and SW neighborhood buildings
- Preparing to pour building pads in community center and NE and SW neighborhood



The Setting:

Residents should enjoy the beautiful natural setting of the new veterans home. The property is home to deer, turkey, hawks and a family of American Eagles. A recently completed retention pond will provide additional views and recreation opportunities.

(Eagle photo courtesy of David Kopiczko, The Christman Company)

SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN HOME TIMELINE FOR CONSTRUCTION

2019:

- **September:** Complete footing, roads and utilities
- **October:** Complete stormwater detention, start exterior wall panels and building pads
- **November:** Continue exterior walls, building pads, start structural steel
- **December:** Structural steel and roofs

2020: Construction continues

2021:

- **Spring:** Anticipated construction completion and certification survey period
- **Summer/Fall:** Facility open for full occupancy