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Cyclist welcomes challenge for his 50th birthday

Nine-week journey across Canada starts June 23

Beth Scott
Record Staff

There won't be any fancy red sports cars or gold chains for Comox Re/Max real estate agent Dave Procter as he heads towards his 50th birthday.

How about a bike ride across Canada instead?

A few years ago Procter came up with the idea of riding across the country. He likes to bike and figured it would be a great way to see the country.

"It really is just one of those things I wanted to do. I am going to be a half of a century old and I always wanted to do something," he said

"And I have always been a goal-setter and this seemed like a perfect mental and physical challenge."

Along with his goal-setting credo, Procter thought it would be better to make the journey if he was doing it for a good cause.

Procter said he has known a number of friends and clients who have had breast cancer.

He has also gained an understanding of the disease from his life partner and fellow Re/Max agent Leah Reichelt when she participated with the Comox Valley Bosom Buddies in the Weekend to End Breast Cancer, a 60-kilometre walk through the streets of Vancouver.

"She and her friends did the walk two years in a row, raising \$40,000," Procter said. "This bike ride just seemed like the perfect fit."

With the B.C. Cancer Foundation sanctioning his ride and assisting in collecting donations through their website, plans are

underway for a nine-week journey set to begin June 23.

Currently, Procter's itinerary includes 55 stops which will take him from Victoria and across to the mainland, up the Coquihalla Highway and on to Calgary.

From there, he's off to Saskatoon and then down to Regina. Then he moves on to Winnipeg, continues east to Thunder Bay, south to Toronto then on to Cornwall and Ottawa.

From Ontario, Procter heads east to Montreal and Quebec City, and then on to New Brunswick. He then will cross the Confederation Bridge to PEI and ends his trip in Nova Scotia after he arrives in Halifax.

"I will fly home, arriving in Vancouver on Sept. 2," he said. "On Sept. 3, I will be coming home on the first ferry and then drive from Nanaimo to Comox making stops along the way."

For the most part Procter said he will be riding alone, but has already

heard from other real estate brokers and friends from across Canada who will join him for different legs of his journey.

While Procter said his parents think he is nuts for taking on such a journey, Leah and the children support him 100 per cent — as a matter of fact they are eager to participate as well.

"Leah has been really supportive, but then it's only been the last few weeks that it hit her that I was really going to do this," he said. "But she has been helping with organization and planning."

Then there is her helping out by driving the motor home the distance — with

help from a few friends — and also taking a few jabs at riding along side as well, Procter adds.

Even the children are getting involved. Procter said nine-year-old Nicholas as well as Danielle and Chase, both 10, will join him in Ontario.

"Chase wants to come out and cycle with me through parts of Ontario in the safe riding areas. The other two will take turns if they like as well," he said.

"Everyone is behind me 100 per cent. The real estate board called and they want to take my cause across Canada fundraising through other brokers. It is getting bigger than I thought it would. It is kind of fun."

To prepare for the trip, Procter said he has been following the advice found in the book *The Complete Book Of Long-Distance Cycling* by Edmond R. Burke and Ed Pavelk.

Nutritionally, he's changing his diet by getting away from sugars and getting used to fuel from carbohydrates. And to have his body ready, he is working on a virtual-reality biking system that he said "puts him right in the TV screen."

"I am building my body up and now



DURING HIS RIDE in Ontario, Dave Procter will be joined on the road by his children Danielle, Chase and Nicholas.

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do daily training which includes aerobics," he said.

"The hardest part of doing a ride is not the physical or the mental but the nutrition ... if you are to ride for eight to 10 hours you need to have lots of carbs, enough fuel to ride."

Procter said the longest bike ride he has taken in his life occurred more than 20 years ago when he took a one-day trip from the Valley to Nanaimo, ferried to Vancouver and rode up to Powell River, then ferried back to the Valley.

More recently, he went with a group on a 160-kilometre cycling trip from here to Sechelt on the Sunshine Coast.

"I am really looking forward to doing this," he said. "I will do this. I am stubborn. I have made up my mind."

Costs for the trip are coming out of Procter's own pocket and through sponsorships. He said he has been offered places to stay and even has had some help with airline tickets for his children.

"One hundred per cent of the fundraising is going to the cancer foundation," he says. "People can donate right online. I don't want to touch the money."

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