

Daily Townsman

Ride for Elizabeth promotes trail safety



Edmund Aunger talks to the gathered crowd in Baker Park on Friday, August 2, during a stop in Cranbrook as part of the "Ride the trail for Elizabeth" campaign.

Arne Petryshen photo

By **Arne Petryshen – Cranbrook Daily Townsman**

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Last July, Edmund Aunger's wife Elizabeth was tragically killed when a vehicle hit her while they were cycling a highway portion of the Prince Edward Island Trans Canada Trail.

Edmund said that had they known the trail went on the highway, they never would have started the journey there.

Elizabeth had always been safety conscious and a big supporter of the Trans Canada Trail being a safe place to ride, so Edmund is taking up Elizabeth's cause and riding across Canada.

On Friday, he rode through Cranbrook, stopping to talk about his journey and the inspiration for it in Baker Park. He is riding with relatives and a number of locals joined in for the Cranbrook portion.

Edmund said that losing his wife last year was a shock – they were only on the first day of their journey – and that this ride is helping him to heal.

The B.C. portion of the trail, mostly on old rail beds, is an amazing experience, Edmund added.

"So much has been invested into this transportation corridor," he said.

"The B.C. government had the insight to buy the Kettle Valley portion."

But Edmund said he has some grievances with the provincial government, since they still have over 700 kilometres of the Trans Canada Trail to build in the next four years – when Canada's 150th anniversary celebration will be happening.

Trans Canada Trail is committed to providing Canadians with a national network of safe, healthful greenway trails by 2017.

He said though that B.C. is still far ahead of Alberta and Saskatchewan in terms of how it looks at the trail.

Edmund plans to ride a portion of the trail each summer and finish the journey in 2017 at the spot where his wife was killed in P.E.I.

"It will be the fifth anniversary of her death," Edmund said.

After talking about his journey, the group set off for their destination of Kikomun Creek Provincial Park at Koocanusa.

Edmund had previously noted that since much of the Kootenay portion of the trail is relatively undeveloped, this is a dangerous part of his journey.

For more information on Edmund Aunger's "Ride the Trail for Elizabeth" campaign, go to **www.ridethetrail.ca**.