Gary Bird, pilot of the BCCSA's Safety on Tour, is ready to roll

The BCCSA's Safety on Tour program is heading out across the province to deliver safety messages to construction sites, schools, trade shows, and community events. After considerable deliberation, the BCCSA has selected Gary Bird, a 41-year veteran of the fire and flood restoration industry, to take the show on the road.

Bird was one of the founding members of the BCCSA's Fire & Flood Restoration Program Technical Advisory Committee.

"My background is going from disaster to disaster in 10 different countries," he says. "From hurricanes to tornadoes to monsoon floods and atmospheric rivers, you name it, I've done it. I wasn't really ready for retirement, so the job posting for Safety on the Road intrigued me."

In preparation for the program, Bird spent a week with the CSAM On Tour Safety Truck, a similar program offered by the Construction Safety Association of Manitoba.

He debuted the BCCSA Safety on the Road program at the Vancouver Island Regional Safety Committee safety series kickoff event in Victoria on February 27th. Five safety presentations relate to common preventable injuries: musculoskeletal injuries, head injuries, eye injuries, cuts to the hands, and basic fall protection.

Bird says he enjoys the idea of tailoring the safety message to different audiences, from seasoned construction workers to school-age crowds.

"It's not going to be the same presentation every time," he says. "I think that's where having the benefit of working in the fire and flood restoration industry comes in. I don't have the luxury of planning safety on an emergency job site. I'm used to working off the cuff."

Bird estimates that a single stop at a high school could potentially reach four shop classes and 120 to 140 people per day.

"The schools are where I think we're going to be able to make the biggest difference," he says.
As for driving hundreds of kilometres between stops, Bird is looking forward to the trips.

"That's what Spotify was made for," he says. "And if I have some time between stops, the fishing rod always comes with me."