

Fines Ford provides vehicles for Heroes are Human tour

By Bill Rea

The Heroes are Human 2016 country-wide tour is ready to go, and it even has the vehicles for the trip.

Fines Ford Lincoln in Bolton will be supplying two vehicles for the two-month tour. Representatives of the tour, as well as representatives of first responders from throughout the area, were one hand Monday at Fines to accept one of the two vehicles.

The tour is being run by the Tema Conter Memorial Trust, a non-profit organization providing peer and psychological support to emergency services, public safety, military, communications and correctional organizations who have to deal with the aftermath of situations they encounter on the job, and the post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) that can result.

The trust was founded by King City resident Vince Savoia (formerly of Bolton), who will be making the tour, starting this coming Monday (May 2).

He said the tour will start at St. John's, Newfoundland, then travel to British Columbia before heading back. The tour finale is scheduled for July 22 in Vaughan.

So far this year, there have been 15 first responders and five military members who have died by suicide in Canada, and 81 in the last two years. According to the Tour's website (www.heroestour.ca), it's estimated that eight per cent of Canadians have PTSD, and that number is two to three times higher among people in the emergency services sectors. The figures could be higher, but some of these people are reluctant to seek help because of the stigma attached.

Earlier this year, the Province introduced legislation aimed at ensuring first responders, correctional and communications officers who have been diagnosed with an occupational stress injury will get help more efficiently and effectively. Savoia said that was good news, although he added it could go farther to include people like doctors and nurses.

?It's a start,? he said. ?It's a start in the right direction.?

Part of the aim of the tour is to build resiliency in those who are at risk of getting PTSD. They are also going to be encouraging first responders to seek mental-health check-ups annually, much the way everyone else is encouraged to see their doctor every year.

Savoia said each stop on the tour will have its own organization there setting up events. There will be community events, panel discussions and showings of a 30-minute version of a documentary entitle The Other Side of the Hero, which he said will be aired in September.

This is the second such tour that's been conducted. The first was in 2014.

Savoia said there's been no decision on whether there will be future tours.

?We'll see how this one plays out,? he said.

The 2014 tour had some 6,000 people attend the various events, and Savoia said the goal for this one is 12,000.

He also thanks Bob Fines of Fines Ford Lincoln for his support of the tour.

?Bob has been a tremendous supporter of the organization for many, many years,? he said.

He also thanked Sings Solutions for decorating the vehicles.

?We're proud to support Vince and his cause,? Fines said, pointing to the importance of getting help for first responders before their problems get worse.



Bob Fines of Fines Ford Lincoln is seen here with Vince Savoia and one of the vehicles Fines is providing for the Heroes are Human 2016 Tour.



First responders were well represented Monday as the first of two vehicles was presented for the Heroes are Human 2016 Tour.