

# 7th Annual Big Walker Century Ride



Registrations were up, the sun was shining, and balloons floated over Main Street for the 7<sup>th</sup> annual Big Walker Century Ride on June 19. The number of riders increased from 92 to 138, and the weather cooperated for the first time in three years, as no rain fell while the sun did shine. It was good weather for balloons—in town for the 25<sup>th</sup> Chautauqua Festival in the Park, which opened the same time as BWCR cyclists headed west on Main Street, under the big banner, and out through the country side of Wythe and Bland counties.

Riders enjoyed the scenery up and down Big Walker Mountain, including a rest stop at the Lookout, which caught riders on the 40 mile, the 50 mile, the metric century and the full century routes. Those few who pedaled the 25 mile route didn't get the zip down the mountain, but still enjoyed the rural and rolling nature of the Black Lick Road.

This year, thanks to a significant new sponsorship level from Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA), which just opened its Southwest Virginia Housing Center in Wytheville in the old post office, HOPE netted over \$10,000 from the fundraiser. HOPE partners with VHDA in financing both single family homes in our Deerfield subdivision, as well in financing of some multi-family projects, including the newly acquired Hillcrest apartments in Hillsville.

## I Climbed the Mountain!

Maysville, Kentucky rider Larry Farris commented on the BWCR Facebook page after the ride: "I came down from northern Kentucky for this tour and it was worth every bit of the drive. I have raced and toured all over the Midwest and the Southeast and your tour is one of the most beautiful and well run events I have ever attended in 15 years of cycling. The scenery was absolutely stunning and the medal at the finish was a classy touch. I have dragged my body over Mt. Mitchell in North Carolina many times and no one ever gave me a medal. Thanks for the great tour." Thanks Larry—we're kind of proud of our mountain, and offering the medal to all who climb it!



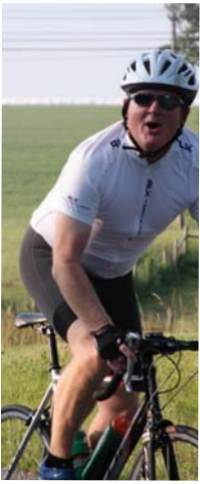
Century rider Brad Monday of Radford won the drawing for this year's grand prize, which included an office chair donated by Wytheville Office Supply. He also took home some other goodies given by the Blue Ridge Gatorade plant here in Wytheville. Over half of all the riders won a gift donated



by area businesses—thanks to all who helped make this a great event.

## ★★ Save the date ★★

The 8th Annual Big Walker Century Ride is set for Saturday, June 18, 2011. Pre-registration will be available January 2011. See you next year!



Former HOPE board chairman, and perennial volunteer for the BWCR, Randy Newberry (left) shakes hands with Bill Threlkeld, the last finisher in this year's BWCR. "The big smile I have is all about being finished," he noted once back at home. Bill presented a particularly inspiring story, overcoming the heat, the rolling hills, even a dog take-down just a few miles from the finish, and the fact that the pool had closed by the time he found the finish area 10 hours and 49 minutes after starting! Bill works for Reston Interfaith as Director of Neighborhood Resources in northern Virginia, an agency very similar but considerably larger than HOPE! Thanks for riding with us, Bill. For more of Bill's story, please visit the BWCR website under the Ride Results tab.



**Attention All Riders**  
Please take a few minutes to fill out our short survey by clicking the link below!

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/TD8YFFP>

***Working mission of HOPE***  
*Facilitate initiatives, coordinate services...aimed at improving individual and family well-being...to increase self-sufficiency, promote healthy lifestyles, and enhance quality of life. Serving the counties of Bland, Wythe, Smyth, Carroll and Grayson and the City of Galax.*



**Sponsors**



A big thanks to Virginia Housing Development Authority, for not only being the first title sponsor of the BWCR, but also for opening up their new office on Main Street for registration early Saturday morning. Special thanks to VHDA's Doug Carrico for helping out with last minute details with the start area.



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