



‘Cyclist Rick Roop rides 58 miles on his 58th birthday on HWY 58 in Lee County, VA.’ – Pictured Above

Local cyclist Rick Roop was on a mission. He determined to ride his bike for 58 miles, on his 58<sup>th</sup> birthday, on highway 58. On a hot and humid day in mid-June, he accomplished that goal. Climbing down from his bike after fully completing the challenge, Rick held up his bike in celebration. “This ride had been in the works for quite some time.” Rick’s wife, Kim, snaps a picture as the cars speed by and the sun beats down.

“This is a monumental moment. Riding on two wheels means more than just a couple of miles riding down the highway,” said Roop. “It’s the wind blowing through your hair and the sweat running down your face. It’s your heart pounding through your chest and voices telling you that this is insane.”

Insane may be right. Roop started cycling around five (?) years ago, and has worked diligently to get to this point. “When I first started riding my bicycle it was not a ride to the top of Pinnacle Road, Fonde mountain, or Clingman’s Dome,” said Roop. “It was a ride around the block on a level part of the road. It might not have been as long, steep, or fast as today’s ride, but it was just as important. It was a starting place to get my courage up to get me started in the right direction.”

Part of the motivation behind Roop’s journey has been to give encouragement to others. He often talks about how overcoming challenges to live a healthy and prosperous life are possible. “To anybody out there who thinks it’s too difficult to do something like this, just remember, the first step is just as important as the next step. Ride for those who can’t, and inspire those who can.”

If you see Rick out riding, remember, you are often stronger than what you think you are. The mission awaits.