

# Catching rides no problem for familiar pedestrian

By Susan Smyth  
*Courier-Record Intern*

There's only one way to get a ride these days.

You've got to have style.

Perhaps you've seen David Hall on the highway between Blackstone and Kenbridge. He's usually sporting a three-piece suit and carrying a brief case.

"I wear a suit for recognition and respect," Hall says. "If people see me in a suit on the highway hitchhiking, they see me more as a respectable individual and have no reason to fear me."

Hall, who lives in Kenbridge, says he is unable to operate a motor vehicle due to a medical condition similar to epilepsy. He still, however, manages to find his way to Food Lion in Blackstone, where he works three days week.

"I don't leave Kenbridge with a ride to work," says Hall. "I'll leave the house, and I'll just start walking. Many times, I get into Kenbridge and someone picks me up, but most times I walk to the end of Kenbridge and wait for a ride. Traffic is pretty heavy to Blackstone by the time I get [there.]"

Hall has become so well-known in this area, that most people know he works at Food Lion, and he no longer wears his suit to catch a ride to work. Instead, he wears his work uniform.

"People pick me up and say, 'Hey, you work at Food Lion!'" says Hall. "To get anywhere else other than work, I wear a suit."

Hall makes a trip to Richmond about every three months to receive medication from the Veteran's Hospital. He served in the Navy from 1963 to 1965.

Hitchhiking in Richmond is a little different than catching a ride in Kenbridge.

Hall has been picked up by police. He was not arrested, but instead, assisted.

"I've been picked up by police, and they've taken me where I need to go," says Hall. "They've been

kind to me. I've even had them radio into the next Town so there is someone to pick me up when they reach their boundary."

Halls claims that the first time he was stopped by police, he explained his medical condition and situation. Police verified his story, and he hasn't had trouble since.

"They take care of me," says Hall.

Hall, originally from Pulaski, came to this area to be near his daughter about five years ago.

While in the Navy, Hall served as a minister, and continues his ministries today in nursing homes, as well as on a local radio station.

But if you're a regular at Food Lion, then you've probably been greeted by Hall's friendly smile and warm welcome.

"He's an awesome employee," says Customer Service Manager Anita Buchanan. "He's customer oriented and he always goes the extra mile."

Hall does not mind expressing enthusiasm for his job.

"They respect me for the work I do," says Hall. "I enjoy being on the front end [near the registers] because of the customer one-on-one relationship."

Hall attributes his ease in getting rides to his customer service abilities, and the fact that people recognize him even when he's not at work.

"Hitchhiking has become an art to me," says Hall. "It's not just me trying to get a ride. People want to give me a ride."

Hall admits that at a point in his life, getting rides like he does now would not have been possible.

"I used to be so backward and bashful," says Hall. "Today, I don't meet a stranger."

So the next time you've got a minute to spare and you happen to see a man dressed in a suit, waiting patiently for a ride, think about pulling over to help him out.

After all, David Hall doesn't know any strangers.