**Officials offer tips on motorcycle safety**

**BY DANIEL KENNEDY**

ARCHDALE — Recent NCDOT data paints a grim picture of what the organization fears could become a future, your whole body hurts.

Motorcycle fatalities appear to be on the rise statewide, and NCDOT officials say 2019 could be one of the most deadly years to date. In 2018, 170 motorcycle-related deaths were reported in North Carolina, up almost 21 percent from the previous year.

Law enforcement officials in Archdale and Randolph County urge those on the road to be aware of each other. "With the post choices of those that decide to use opioids or drink before driving, the damages have increased for anyone on the road," said Archdale Police Capt. David Jones. "Motorcyclists should ride with the mindset of anything being possible. They should be prepared for those that run traffic signals and lights and those that cannot maintain their lanes. "While many tend to forget, all vehicles are very dangerous if they are not treated with respect and operated appropriately, motorcyclists have less protection during an impact." NCDOT and law enforcement officers suspect one cause for the increase in deaths could be distracted driving, most commonly by the use of technology. While it cannot be determined for certain, officers blame fatalities for at least part of the problem.

As the temperature rises, so too could the risk of accidents, officials fear. In order to combat the problem, Randolph County Sheriff Greg疽.

**Expansion proposed for recreation center**

**BY DANIEL KENNEDY**

ARCHDALE — A proposal for an allocation of $1 million in three years’ time would bring needed upgrades to the recreation center.

Zeb Holden, Archdale’s city manager, presented a general timeline for improvements during the city’s annual retreat that would include funding for an expansion space/needs study in the upcoming fiscal year and the selection of an architect in the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

“Once item that came up during our meeting with council, the acknowledgement that the recreation center is not suitable to meet all the needs of today and certainly not the future for programming,“ Holden said. “What you see for those three years is a possible time line for, in the coming year, doing a space needs study to determine what kind of room we should really consider moving forward.”

The plan calls for a proposed $500,000 for a downtown park and $1.1 million for Creekside Park trails. In all, the preliminary plan in its current form would designate more than $4.4 million for improvements to the city’s parks and recreation over the next five years.

“We would build some consensus with the study in the coming year,” Holden said. “The following year, we’d get an architect work up plans, and then the following year, look to potentially follow...”

**Dr. Jah helps you put your best foot forward**

**BY DEBBIE HIGHTOWER**

ARCHDALE — Meet Archdale’s newest podiatrist! Dr. N’Tuma Jah, 35, has operated a man and his wife.

Students at John Lawrence Elementary School got a taste of African culture during a Feb. 21 visit from Suah African Dance Theater group. The Feb. 21 performances in the school gymnasium/auditorium were organized by Artistic director Wesley Williams gives students a lesson on African dance and songs in the Swahili language.

According to Suah founder and artistic director Wesley Williams, the group (named after the Swahili word for feet) brings a diverse array of performances to local schools each year. Past performers have included storytellers, brass ensembles and Latino percussionists, among others.

"I went to NC State to become an architect and fell and twisted my ankle," said Dr. Jah. "I decided to go to podiatry school because of a lack of podiatry services in the area."

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"umoja" is a Swahili word that means unity. Through his words Wil- liams promoted positive character traits such as the value of listening and respecting parents and teachers. He also introduced students to the djembe, an African drum.

"The djembe is like a cellphone," he said. "In the past it was used for communication. This drum could talk to people up to three miles away."

Drums provided rhythm as dancers Alexis Brown, Tabia McKinzie and Gabrielle Yvette Williams leaped and spun to the beat. Williams' young son Jeremiah contributed to the program not only through his drumming skills, but also a swirling sword dance.

Audience participation in the dances led to a dance-off contest between JLE students Anthony Banks and Madison Reiling.

"This is a unique combination of singing, dancing, storytelling and drumming," said CIS Executive Director Paula Owens.

JLE Storyteller Fred Mott uses a percussion instrument to enhance his narration of a traditional folk tale. His visit, and that of Suah African Dance Theater, was coordinated by Communities in Schools of Randolph County.

Wesley Williams of Suah African Dance Theater demonstrates various sounds made by a djembe, a traditional African drum that, until recent times, was used for communication over long distances.