

THE MAYOR'S



Green Bay Mayor Jim Schmitt FILE PHOTO

# 'METRO' MERGER

## Combine with Green Bay? No thanks, neighbors say

By **Scott Cooper Williams**

Press-Gazette Media

To Green Bay Mayor Jim Schmitt, merging with nearby municipalities is a winning strategy to create a larger city that would wield more clout and operate more efficiently.

To surrounding community leaders, the concept sounds like an invitation to be gobbled up.

So begins the debate surrounding Schmitt's proposal to restructure the Green Bay region into a single municipality with one government serving a population of more than 180,000 people.

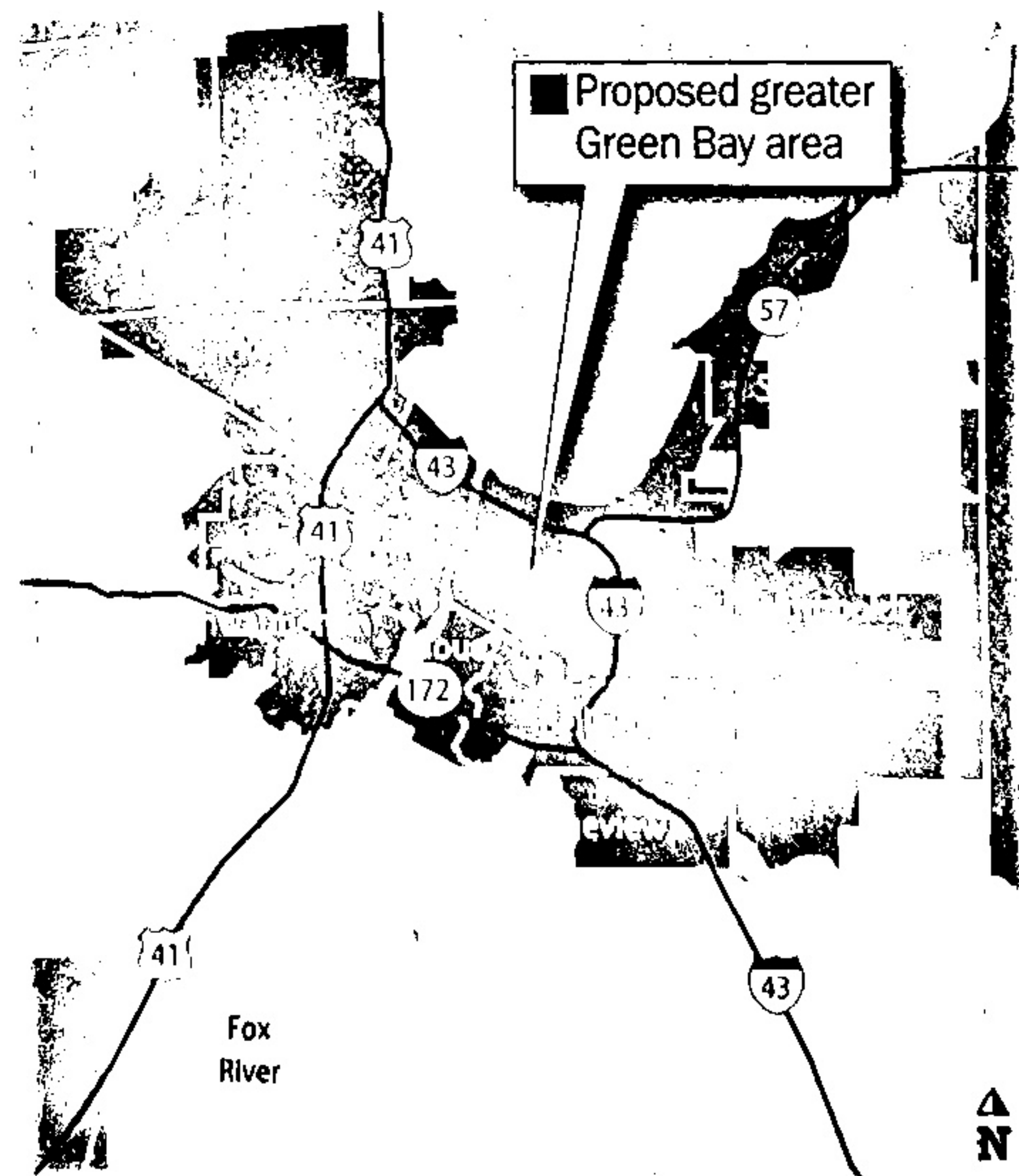
Schmitt presented the idea last week in his State of the City address, saying that combining

Green Bay with Allouez, Ashwaubenon and other neighbors would create one of Wisconsin's strongest and most dynamic cities.

"The politics," he added, "are the only thing that can make or break this."

The politics at the outset are thick and murky, as elected officials in several neighboring municipalities voice opposition to a concept they believe would strip their communities of a sense of identity and autonomy.

Ashwaubenon Village President Mike Aubinger said Green Bay's mayor should work on improving relations with nearby communities rather than float merger proposals without first



» See **MERGER**, A4

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