

Libraries eye mega-merger

Could be a model for statewide savings

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BURLINGTON — In what could become a statewide model for consolidation, merger talks are underway to combine management of libraries from Racine to Beloit.

The merger of the Lakeshores Library System and the Arrowhead Library System would involve 22 libraries with a combined membership exceeding 280,000 throughout the neighboring counties of Racine, Walworth and Rock.

If all three county boards give their approval, the two library networks would combine effective Jan. 1, creating a single governing board to oversee facilities in all three counties.

Lakeshores includes five libraries in Racine County and 10 in Walworth County, while Arrowhead includes seven in Rock County. The consolidation



JONATHAN BRINES, JOURNAL TIMES FILE PHOTO

Will Ortiz Jr., left, 8, of Racine, picks out a book in this file photo from 2017 at the Racine Public Library, 75 Seventh St., accompanied by his sister, Mackenzie, 7, and father Will Ortiz Sr.

would affect the Racine Public Library as well as others in Burlington, Lake Geneva, Elkhorn, Janesville, Beloit and elsewhere.

While library visitors would not likely notice an immediate difference, officials say the merger would streamline operations, improve efficiency and save money.

State officials who help to fund libraries and have been urging consolidation for years

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SCAN: Read the report suggesting Wisconsin public library mergers
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