



For Immediate Release
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Prairie Lakes Library System Gets Green Light; Debuting January 2023

Tuesday, October 11, 2022 – Milton, Wis. – Walworth County became the third and final county to approve the merger of Arrowhead Library System (ALS) and Lakeshores Library System (LLS). The newly merged entity, Prairie Lakes Library System (PLLS), will take effect on January 1, 2023, and will serve the counties of Racine, Rock, and Walworth.

Following Walworth County's vote and ahead of the October 15 deadline, the necessary annual system plan was filed with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction declaring the formation of PLLS and the dissolutions of ALS and LLS. A few of the next steps include appointing representatives to the PLLS board of trustees and developing policy recommendations for the new board to adopt.

"This merger process has been years in the making, really, but the last 10 months have been an intense stretch of research, planning, and collaboration," said Steve Platteter, director of Arrowhead Library System.

Steve Ohs, Administrator of Lakeshores Library System added, "It's tremendously rewarding to see the partnerships we've forged become solidified, the research the exploration committee completed used to inform our communities, and the strategic goals of this merger be embraced so enthusiastically not only by every library in both systems but also by all three counties."

Patrons will not be directly affected by the merger; local library boards will maintain local control over their policies and procedures as before (as outlined in state statutes), and because library systems are funded through state appropriations county budgets need not be altered. The merger's primary benefit is reduced overhead and administration costs, which will result in more dollars for services.

The ALS/LLS Joint Merger Exploration Committee's Final Recommendation Report, PLLS's System Plan, and other public documents relating to the proposed merge are available at <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Kgm2-75arnZG2xBdV-LXVx28-JNL094m?usp=sharing>.

About Wisconsin Public Library Systems

The creation of public library systems fostered the establishment of a strong network of resource-sharing and mutually beneficial interdependence. The creation and development of public library systems in Wisconsin were voluntary and gradual. No county or public library is required to be a member of a library system; yet, as of this writing, all of Wisconsin's 72



counties and more than 380 public libraries are library system members. Wisconsin's 16 public library systems developed in distinct ways in response to the needs of their member libraries and area residents. According to the statutes, two library systems may merge if approved by the System Boards of Trustees and the County Boards of Supervisors of the participating counties.

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