To the editor of the Post-Crescent:

Public libraries make a statement about the quality of a community and the values a community holds. The strength and values of Appleton and the Fox Cities already appear in the education this community provides. We take pride in the opportunities our children and young adults have — to learn and grow right here at home.

As an employer, one of Lawrence University’s strongest appeals to talented candidates for faculty and staff positions is the vitality of the education system here. A modern public library will enhance this regional strength significantly.

Libraries offer communal access to a wealth of resources unmatched by any other public or private institution. While libraries of the past were focused on providing resources like books, magazines, newspaper archives and other audio-visual media, libraries today are filling a different role.

Modern libraries have become gathering places for friends and families, and meeting locations to discuss community issues. They’re cinemas for film screenings and lecture halls for lifelong education. They’re keepers of sacred texts and repositories for the collective memory of their communities. Public libraries are also incubators for start-ups and spaces for collaboration.

Libraries are the crossroads of communities. In short, they’re the home for the learner in all of us.

I support the library proposal because I believe in the importance of learning and a shared cultural experience in the Fox Cities.

As a community, we have an opportunity to create a facility that reinforces our collective values and demonstrates our shared belief that access to education and resources are crucial elements of fulfilling lives and a thriving regional economy.

Mark Burstein,
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