

Bresler Joshua D
 Form 3
 May 13, 2013

FORM 3 UNITED STATES SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20549

OMB APPROVAL

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INITIAL STATEMENT OF BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP OF SECURITIES

Filed pursuant to Section 16(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934,
 Section 17(a) of the Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935 or Section
 30(h) of the Investment Company Act of 1940

(Print or Type Responses)

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| 1. Name and Address of Reporting Person * Â Bresler Joshua D (Last) (First) (Middle) | 2. Date of Event Requiring Statement (Month/Day/Year) 05/09/2013 | 3. Issuer Name and Ticker or Trading Symbol STERLING FINANCIAL CORP /WA/ [STSA] | 4. Relationship of Reporting Person(s) to Issuer (Check all applicable) | 5. If Amendment, Date Original Filed(Month/Day/Year) |
|--|--|--|--|--|

C/O THOMAS H. LEE
 PARTNERS, L.P., Â 100
 FEDERAL STREET, 35TH
 FLOOR
 (Street)

BOSTON, Â MA Â 02110
 (City) (State) (Zip)

Director 10% Owner
 Officer Other
 (give title below) (specify below)

6. Individual or Joint/Group Filing(Check Applicable Line)
 Form filed by One Reporting Person
 Form filed by More than One Reporting Person

Table I - Non-Derivative Securities Beneficially Owned

| 1. Title of Security (Instr. 4) | 2. Amount of Securities Beneficially Owned (Instr. 4) | 3. Ownership Form: Direct (D) or Indirect (I) (Instr. 5) | 4. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership (Instr. 5) |
|------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Common Stock | 12,953,485 ⁽¹⁾ | I | See footnote ⁽²⁾ |

Reminder: Report on a separate line for each class of securities beneficially owned directly or indirectly. SEC 1473 (7-02)

Persons who respond to the collection of information contained in this form are not required to respond unless the form displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Table II - Derivative Securities Beneficially Owned (e.g., puts, calls, warrants, options, convertible securities)

| 1. Title of Derivative Security (Instr. 4) | 2. Date Exercisable and Expiration Date (Month/Day/Year) | 3. Title and Amount of Securities Underlying Derivative Security | 4. Conversion or Exercise | 5. Ownership Form of | 6. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership |
|---|---|--|---------------------------|----------------------|--|
|---|---|--|---------------------------|----------------------|--|

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| | Date Exercisable | Expiration Date | (Instr. 4) Title | Amount or Number of Shares | Price of Derivative Security | Derivative Security: Direct (D) or Indirect (I) (Instr. 5) | (Instr. 5) |
|---------|------------------|-----------------|---------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Warrant | 10/21/2010 | 08/26/2017 | Common Stock | 1,374,522 | \$ 13.86 ⁽³⁾ | I | See footnote ⁽²⁾ |

Reporting Owners

| Reporting Owner Name / Address | Relationships | | | |
|--|---------------|-----------|---------|-------|
| | Director | 10% Owner | Officer | Other |
| Bresler Joshua D C/O THOMAS H. LEE PARTNERS, L.P. 100 FEDERAL STREET, 35TH FLOOR BOSTON, MA 02110 | X | | | |

Signatures

/s/ Joshua D.
Bresler

05/13/2013

 Signature of
Reporting Person

Date

Explanation of Responses:

* If the form is filed by more than one reporting person, *see* Instruction 5(b)(v).

** Intentional misstatements or omissions of facts constitute Federal Criminal Violations. *See* 18 U.S.C. 1001 and 15 U.S.C. 78ff(a).

Represents securities of the Issuer held directly by Thomas H. Lee Equity Fund VI, L.P. ("Equity"), Thomas H. Lee Parallel Fund VI, L.P. ("Parallel"), Thomas H. Lee Parallel (DT) Fund VI, L.P. ("DT"), and THL Sterling Equity Investors L.P. ("Sterling", and together with Equity, Parallel and DT, the "Funds") and THL Managers VI, LLC.

(2) The reporting person is a member of Thomas H. Lee Advisors, LLC, which is the general partner of Thomas H. Lee Partners, L.P., which is the manager of THL Equity Advisors VI, LLC, which, in turn, is the general partner of each of the Funds. Thomas H. Lee Partners, L.P. and Thomas H. Lee Advisors, LLC are the sole members of THL Managers VI, LLC. As such, the reporting person may be deemed to beneficially own the shares of the Issuer owned directly by each of the Funds and THL Managers VI, LLC. The reporting person disclaims beneficial ownership of such shares, and this report shall not be deemed an admission that the reporting person is the beneficial owner of the securities for the purpose of Section 16 or for any other purpose, except to the extent of his pecuniary interest therein.

(3) The Warrant is exercisable, in whole or part, to purchase 1,374,522 shares of Common Stock, subject to adjustments for certain issuances of common stock, stock splits, stock subdivisions, stock reclassifications, stock combinations, other distributions, certain repurchases, business combinations and similar actions.

Note: File three copies of this Form, one of which must be manually signed. If space is insufficient, *See* Instruction 6 for procedure.

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