

Edgar Filing: FIRST MERCHANTS CORP - Form 8-K

FIRST MERCHANTS CORP
Form 8-K
March 21, 2008

UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20549

FORM 8-K

CURRENT REPORT

PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE
SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934

DATE OF REPORT (Date of earliest event reported): March 21, 2008

FIRST MERCHANTS CORPORATION
(Exact Name of Registrant as Specified in its Charter)

INDIANA 0-17071 35-1544218
(State or other jurisdiction (Commission File Number) (IRS Employer
of incorporation) Identification No.)

200 East Jackson Street
P.O. Box 792
Muncie, IN 47305-2814
(Address of Principal Executive Offices, including Zip Code)

(765) 747-1500
(Registrant's Telephone Number, including Area Code)

Check the appropriate box below if the Form 8-K filing is intended to simultaneously satisfy the filing obligation of the registrant under any of the following provisions:

- Written communications pursuant to Rule 425 under the Securities Act (17 CFR 230.425)
- Soliciting material pursuant to Rule 14a-12 under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.14a-12)
- Pre-commencement communications pursuant to Rule 14d-2(b) under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.14d-2(b))
- Pre-commencement communications pursuant to Rule 13e-4(c) under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.13e-4(c))

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N / E / W / S R / E / L / E / A / S / E

March 21, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information, contact:

Mark K. Hardwick, Executive Vice President/Chief Financial Officer, 765-751-1857

<http://www.firstmerchants.com>

SOURCE: First Merchants Corporation (Nasdaq: FRME), Muncie, Indiana

FIRST MERCHANTS CORPORATION ANNOUNCES SALE OF INTEREST RATE FLOOR AGREEMENTS

On March 19, 2008, First Merchants Corporation received \$5,216,000 in connection with the termination of its three interest rate floor agreements. The three interest rate floors, which had an aggregate notional amount of \$250 million and strike rates ranging from 6% to 7%, were purchased on August 1, 2006 for \$553,500. The contractual maturity of the floors was August 1, 2009. During the life of the floors, pre-tax gains of approximately \$4,662,500 were deferred in accumulated other comprehensive income (AOCI) in accordance with cash flow hedge accounting rules established by SFAS No. 133, Accounting for Derivative Instruments and Hedging Activities (as amended). The amounts deferred in AOCI will be reclassified out of equity into earnings over the remaining sixteen months of the original contract. SFAS 133 requires that amounts deferred in AOCI be reclassified into earnings in the same periods during which the originally hedged cash flows (prime-based interest payments on loan assets) affects earnings, as long as the originally hedged cash flows remain probable of occurring (i.e. the principal amount of designated prime-based loans match or exceed the notional amount of the terminated floor through August 1, 2009). If the principal amount of the originally hedged loans falls below the notional amount of the terminate floors, then amounts in AOCI could be accelerated. The Corporation decided to terminate the interest rate floor agreements only after considering the impact of the transaction on its risk management objectives and after alternative strategies were in place to mitigate the adverse impact of falling interest rates on its net interest margin.

About First Merchants Corporation

First Merchants Corporation is a financial holding company headquartered in Muncie, Indiana. Subsidiaries of the Corporation include First Merchants Bank, N.A., First Merchants Bank of Central Indiana, N.A., Lafayette Bank & Trust Company, N.A., Commerce National Bank and First Merchants Trust Company, N.A. The Corporation also operates First Merchants Insurance Services, a full-service property casualty, personal lines, and healthcare insurance agency and is a majority member of Indiana Title Insurance Company, LLC, a title insurance agency.

First Merchants Corporation's common stock is traded over-the-counter on the NASDAQ National Market System under the symbol FRME. Quotations are carried in daily newspapers and can be found on the company's Internet web page (<http://www.firstmerchants.com>).

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