

HARDWICK MARK K
Form 4
January 31, 2006

FORM 4

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

OMB APPROVAL

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Check this box if no longer subject to Section 16. Form 4 or Form 5 obligations may continue. See Instruction 1(b).

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN 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 *
HARDWICK MARK K

2. Issuer Name and Ticker or Trading Symbol
**FIRST MERCHANTS CORP
[FRME]**

5. Relationship of Reporting Person(s) to Issuer

(Check all applicable)

(Last) (First) (Middle)
200 EAST JACKSON STREET

(Street)

3. Date of Earliest Transaction (Month/Day/Year)
01/31/2006

____ Director _____ 10% Owner
 Officer (give title below) Other (specify below)
Executive Vice President / Chief Financial Officer

MUNICE, IN 47305

4. If Amendment, Date Original Filed(Month/Day/Year)

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

(City) (State) (Zip)

Table I - Non-Derivative Securities Acquired, Disposed of, or Beneficially Owned

1. Title of Security (Instr. 3)	2. Transaction Date (Month/Day/Year)	2A. Deemed Execution Date, if any (Month/Day/Year)	3. Transaction Code (Instr. 8)	4. Securities Acquired (A) or Disposed of (D) (Instr. 3, 4 and 5)	5. Amount of Securities Beneficially Owned Following Reported Transaction(s) (Instr. 3 and 4)	6. Ownership Form: Direct (D) or Indirect (I) (Instr. 4)	7. Nature of Ownership (Instr. 4)
			Code	V Amount (D) Price			
Common Stock	01/31/2006		M	131.79 A \$ 0	851.79	D	
Common Stock	01/31/2006		D	131.79 D \$ 26	720	D	

Reminder: Report on a separate line for each class of securities beneficially owned directly or indirectly.

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

Table with 7 columns: 1. Title of Derivative Security, 2. Conversion or Exercise Price of Derivative Security, 3. Transaction Date, 3A. Deemed Execution Date, 4. Transaction Code, 5. Number of Derivative Securities, 6. Date Exercisable and Expiration Date, 7. Title and Amount of Underlying Securities. Includes entry for Deferred Stock Units.

Reporting Owners

Table with 2 main columns: Reporting Owner Name / Address and Relationships. Lists HARDWICK MARK K and their roles: Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer.

Signatures

Larry R. Helms (Confirming Statement on File) 01/31/2006
Signature of Reporting Person Date

Explanation of Responses:

- * If the form is filed by more than one reporting person, see Instruction 4(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).
(1) Conversion price of derivative security is 1 for 1.
(2) Employee Stock Option - Right to Buy equals 28,670 shares.
(3) Reporting person received \$242.49 from accumulated dividends on year 2003 deferred stock untis.

Note: File three copies of this Form, one of which must be manually signed. If space is insufficient, see Instruction 6 for procedure. Potential persons who are to respond to the collection of information contained in this form are not required to respond unless the form displays a currently valid OMB number.