

FIRST MERCHANTS CORP  
 Form 3  
 January 30, 2008

**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 * Stewart Michael J (Last) (First) (Middle)  200 EAST JACKSON STREET (Street)  MUNCIE, IN 47305 (City) (State) (Zip)	2. Date of Event Requiring Statement (Month/Day/Year) 01/29/2008	3. Issuer Name and Ticker or Trading Symbol FIRST MERCHANTS CORP [FRME]	4. Relationship of Reporting Person(s) to Issuer  (Check all applicable) <input type="checkbox"/> Director <input type="checkbox"/> 10% Owner <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Officer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (give title below) (specify below) Executive Vice President / Chief Banking Officer	5. If Amendment, Date Original Filed(Month/Day/Year)	6. Individual or Joint/Group Filing(Check Applicable Line) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Form filed by One Reporting Person <input type="checkbox"/> Form filed by More than One Reporting Person
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**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	3,750	D	^

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

SEC 1473 (7-02)

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**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 (Instr. 4)	4. Conversion or Exercise Price of Derivative Security	5. Ownership Form of Derivative Security: Direct (D) or Indirect	6. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership (Instr. 5)
	Date Exercisable      Expiration Date	Title      Amount or Number of			

				Shares		(I) (Instr. 5)	
Employee stock option right to buy	01/29/2010	01/29/2018	Common Stock	6,000	\$ 24.55	D	^

## Reporting Owners

Reporting Owner Name / Address	Relationships			
	Director	10% Owner	Officer	Other
Stewart Michael J 200 EAST JACKSON STREET MUNCIE, IN 47305	^	^	^ Executive Vice President	Chief Banking Officer

## Signatures

Larry R. Helms (Confirming Statement on File) 01/30/2008

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).

Remarks:  
Exhibit 24

### Confirming Statement

This statement confirms that the undersigned, Michael J. Stewart, has authorized and designated Larry R. Helms to execute and file on the undersigned's behalf all Forms 3, 4, and 5 (including any amendments thereto) that the undersigned may be required to file with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission as a result of the undersigned's ownership of or transactions in the securities of First Merchants Corporation. The authority of Larry R. Helms under this statement shall continue until the undersigned is no longer required to file Forms 3, 4, and 5 with regard to the undersigned's ownership of or transactions in securities of First Merchants Corporation, unless earlier revoked in writing. The undersigned acknowledges Larry R. Helms is not assuming any of the undersigned's responsibilities to comply with Section 16 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934.

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.