

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP

Filed pursuant to Section 16(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934
or Section 30(h) of the Investment Company Act of 1940

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

Check this box to indicate that a
transaction was made pursuant to a
contract, instruction or written plan for
the purchase or sale of equity
securities of the issuer that is intended
to satisfy the affirmative defense
conditions of Rule 10b5-1(c). See
Instruction 10.

1. Name and Address of Reporting Person* HARDWICK MARK K (Last) (First) (Middle) 200 E JACKSON STREET (Street) MUNCIE IN 47305 (City) (State) (Zip)	2. Issuer Name and Ticker or Trading Symbol FIRST MERCHANTS CORP [FRME] Foreign Trading Symbol 3. Date of Earliest Transaction (Month/Day/Year) 08/02/2026 4. If Amendment, Date of Original Filed (Month/Day/Year)	5. Relationship of Reporting Person(s) to Issuer (Check all applicable) ☒ Director 10% Owner ☒ Officer (give title below) Other (specify below) Chief Executive Officer 6. Individual or Joint/Group Filing (Check Applicable Line) ☒ Form filed by One Reporting Person Form filed by More than One Reporting Person
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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 Beneficial Ownership (Instr. 4)
			Code	V	Amount	(A) or (D)	Price			
Common Stock	08/02/2026		F		5,821	D	\$43.14	111,619.799	D	
Common Stock	08/03/2026		A		21,000	A	\$43.63	132,619.799 ⁽¹⁾	D	
Common Stock								17,458.923	I	401(k) Plan
Common Stock								446	I	Spouse IRA

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

1. Title of Derivative Security (Instr. 3)	2. Conversion or Exercise Price of Derivative Security	3. Transaction Date (Month/Day/Year)	3A. Deemed Execution Date, if any (Month/Day/Year)	4. Transaction Code (Instr. 8)		5. Number of Derivative Securities Acquired (A) or Disposed of (D) (Instr. 3, 4 and 5)	6. Date Exercisable and Expiration Date (Month/Day/Year)		7. Title and Amount of Securities Underlying Derivative Security (Instr. 3 and 4)		8. Price of Derivative Security (Instr. 5)	9. Number of derivative Securities Beneficially Owned Following Reported Transaction(s) (Instr. 4)	10. Ownership Form: Direct (D) or Indirect (I) (Instr. 4)	11. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership (Instr. 4)
				Code	V		Date Exercisable	Expiration Date	Title	Amount or Number of Shares				
Phantom Stock	(2)						(2)	(2)	Common Stock	3,354.695		3,354.695	D	

Explanation of Responses:

1. Includes Restricted Stock Awards totaling 65,384.128 shares.
2. Each share of phantom stock is the economic equivalent of one share of FRME common stock. The shares of phantom stock will be settled in cash or shares of FRME common stock, at the reporting person's election, upon separation from First Merchants.

Remarks:

Paul Cento (Confirming Statement on File) **08/04/2026**
** Signature of Reporting Person Date

Reminder: Report on a separate line for each class of securities beneficially owned directly or indirectly.
* 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).
Note: File three copies of this Form, one of which must be manually signed. If space is insufficient, see Instruction 6 for procedure.
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 Number.