

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): February 23, 2011**

**Commission File Number 0-17071**

**FIRST MERCHANTS CORPORATION**

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

INDIANA  
(State or other jurisdiction of incorporation)

35-1544218  
(IRS Employer 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)

**Not Applicable**  
(Former name or former address, if changed since last report)

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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## **ITEM 8.01 OTHER EVENTS**

On February 23, 2011, First Merchants Corporation issued a press release announcing the declaration of a cash dividend of \$0.01 per share. The cash dividend is payable on March 21, 2011 to stockholders of record as of March 7, 2011. A copy of the press release is furnished as Exhibit 99.1 to this Current Report on Form 8-K.

The information in this Form 8-K and the attached exhibit shall not be deemed "filed" for purposes of Section 18 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the "Exchange Act"), or incorporated by reference in any filing under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, or the Exchange Act, except as shall be expressly set forth by specific reference in such a filing.

## **ITEM 9.01 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND EXHIBITS.**

- (a) Not applicable.
- (b) Not applicable.
- (c) Exhibits.

Exhibit 99.1      Press Release dated February 23, 2011 issued by First Merchants Corporation

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**SIGNATURES**

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, the Registrant has duly caused this report to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned hereunto duly authorized.

First Merchants Corporation  
(Registrant)

By: /s/ Mark K. Hardwick  
Mark K. Hardwick  
Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer  
(Principal Financial and Principal Accounting Officer)

Dated: February 23, 2011

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EXHIBIT INDEX

<u>Exhibit No.</u>	<u>Description</u>
99.1	Press Release, dated February 23, 2011, issued by First Merchants Corporation

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February 23, 2011

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

For more information, contact:

David L. Ortega, First Vice President/Director of Investor Relations

765-378-8937

<http://www.firstmerchants.com>

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

**FIRST MERCHANTS CORPORATION ANNOUNCES CASH DIVIDEND**

First Merchants Corporation declared a cash dividend on February 23, 2011 of \$0.01 per share, payable on March 21, 2011, to shareholders of record on March 7, 2011. For purposes of broker trading, the ex-date of the cash dividend is March 3, 2011.

About First Merchants Corporation:

First Merchants Corporation is a financial holding company headquartered in Muncie, Indiana. The Corporation is comprised of First Merchants Bank, N.A., which also operates as Lafayette Bank & Trust, Commerce National Bank, and First Merchants Trust Company as divisions of First Merchants Bank, N.A. First Merchants Corporation also operates First Merchants Insurance Group, a full-service property casualty, personal lines, and healthcare insurance agency.

First Merchants Corporation's common stock is traded on the NASDAQ Global Select 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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