

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: June 21, 2006

EXHIBIT INDEX

Exhibit No.

99.1

Description

Press Release, dated June 21, 2006, regarding the matter referenced in Item 5.02.

First Merchants Corporation

Exhibit No. 99.1

Press Release, dated June 21, 2006

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

June 21, 2006

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information, contact:

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

<http://firstmerchants.com>

SOURCE: First Merchants Corporation, Muncie, Indiana

FIRST MERCHANTS CORPORATION ANNOUNCES CEO RETURNS FROM TEMPORARY MEDICAL LEAVE

First Merchants Corporation announced today that Michael L. Cox has returned from his temporary medical leave of absence and has resumed his normal duties as President and Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation. During Mr. Cox's absence, Michael C. Rechin, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, performed the President and CEO duties. Mr. Cox stated, "I am happy to be back at work and am grateful to Mr. Rechin for taking on these extra responsibilities while I was on leave."

Forward Looking Statement

In our press releases, we may make Forward Looking Statements about our relative business outlook. These Forward Looking Statements and all other statements, made in our communications that do not concern historical facts, are subject to risks and uncertainties that may materially affect actual results.

Specific Forward Looking Statements include but are not limited to any indications regarding the financial services industry, the economy and future growth of the Corporation's balance sheet or income statement.

About First Merchants Corporation

First Merchants Corporation is a financial holding company headquartered in Muncie, Indiana. Subsidiaries of the Corporation include First Merchants Bank, NA, Madison Community Bank, United Communities National Bank, First National Bank, Decatur Bank & Trust Company, Frances Slocum Bank, Lafayette Bank & Trust Company, Commerce National Bank and First Merchants Trust Company. 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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