

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): January 15, 2018

Commission File Number 0-17071

FIRST MERCHANTS CORPORATION

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

INDIANA	35-1544218
(State or other jurisdiction of incorporation)	(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))

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is an emerging growth company as defined in Rule 405 of the Securities Act of 1933 (§230.405 of this chapter) or Rule 12b-2 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (§240.12b-2 of this chapter).

Emerging growth company

If an emerging growth company, indicate by check mark if the registrant has elected not to use the extended transition period for complying with any new or revised financial accounting standards provided pursuant to Section 13(a) of the Exchange Act.

ITEM 8.01 OTHER EVENTS

On January 15, 2018, First Merchants Corporation issued a press release announcing a raise in the wage of its hourly employees as a result of the Tax Cuts and Job Act of 2017, as well as a \$500 one-time bonus paid to those employees as a reward for the company's 2017 performance. 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) Not applicable.

(d) Exhibits.

Exhibit 99.1	Press Release dated January 15, 2018 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.

DATE: January 16, 2018

FIRST MERCHANTS CORPORATION

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

EXHIBIT INDEX

<u>Exhibit No.</u>	<u>Description</u>
99.1	Press Release dated January 15, 2018 issued by First Merchants Corporation



PRESS RELEASE

January 15, 2018

Media Contact

Chad Mertz
(317) 977-2206 x204
cmertz@hirons.com

First Merchants announces company-wide raise, bonuses

Tax reform, strong 2017 performance leads to employee investment

Muncie, Ind. - First Merchants Corporation (NASDAQ - FRME) announced today that it will raise the wage paid to hourly employees by \$1 per hour as a result of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 signed by President Trump in Dec. 2017.

Additionally, as a reward for the company's strong 2017 performance, all associates, excluding senior management, will receive a \$500 one-time cash bonus. Part-time associates will receive a pro-rated share.

The compensation investments will impact nearly 90 percent of First Merchants' 1,700 employees and will be in addition to the company's existing incentive programs and annual merit increases.

"My colleagues at First Merchants provide superior service to our clients and devote themselves to the communities we serve every day," said First Merchants President and CEO Michael C. Rechin. "We are proud to share the savings provided by the tax reform package to reward their hard work and dedication with an increase in compensation."

Celebrating 125 years of serving communities in 2018, First Merchants dedicates significant annual investment to both community and employee philanthropy.

In addition to its direct financial contributions, First Merchants recently tripled the number of schools to which it delivers financial literacy programs (10 to 35) and will impact more than 10,000 students by the end of the current school year.

First Merchants Serves, an employee program designed to facilitate community investment, provides for thousands of hours of community service. As part of the program, every First Merchants employee receives a paid workday annually to volunteer their time to work on meaningful causes within their local community.

“Our mission is to be the most responsive, knowledgeable and high-performing bank for our clients, teammates and shareholders,” said Rechin. “We continue to live that mission in 2018 with investments in mobile and digital platforms, brand building and continuing to offer programs for associates like tuition reimbursement, retirement savings contributions, training and a variety of professional development opportunities.”

About First Merchants Corporation

First Merchants Corporation is a financial holding company headquartered in Muncie, Indiana. The Corporation has one full-service bank charter, First Merchants Bank. The Bank also operates as Lafayette Bank & Trust and First Merchants Private Wealth Advisors (each as a division of First Merchants Bank).

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 website (www.firstmerchants.com). FIRST MERCHANTS and the Shield Logo are federally registered trademarks of First Merchants Corporation.