

UNITED STATES SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
 WASHINGTON, D.C. 20549
 FORM 3
 INITIAL STATEMENT OF BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP OF SECURITIES

1. Name and Address of Reporting Person
 ARWOOD, ROGER M
 200 E JACKSON ST
 MUNCIE, IN 47305
 USA
2. Date of Event Requiring Statement (Month/Day/Year)
 March 1, 2000
3. IRS or Social Security Number of Reporting Person (Voluntary)
 ###-##-####
4. Issuer Name and Ticker or Trading Symbol
 FIRST MERCHANTS CORPORATION
 FRME
5. Relationship of Reporting Person(s) to Issuer (Check all applicable)
 Director 10% Owner Officer (give title below) Other
 (specify below)
 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
6. If Amendment, Date of Original (Month/Day/Year)
7. Individual or Joint/Group Filing (Check Applicable Line)
 Form filed by One Reporting Person
 Form filed by More than One Reporting Person

Table I -- Non-Derivative Securities Beneficially Owned

1. Title of Security	2. Amount of Securities Beneficially Owned	3. Ownership Form: Direct(D) or Indirect(I)	4. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership
COMMON STOCK	0		

Table II -- Derivative Securities Beneficially Owned

1. Title of Derivative Security	2. Date Exercisable and Expiration Date (Month/Day/Year)	3. Title and Amount of Underlying Securities	4. Conversion or Exercise Price of Derivative Security	5. Ownership Form of Derivative Security: Direct(D) or Indirect(I)	6. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership
Employee Stock Option (Right to Buy)	09-01-00 02-28-10	Common Stock	5,000 24.6875	D	

Explanation of Responses:
 SIGNATURE OF REPORTING PERSON
 Roger M. Arwood (Confirming Statement on File)
 DATE
 March 3, 2000