

FORM 4

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP

Filed pursuant to Section 16(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934,  
Section 17(a) of the Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935 or  
Section 30(f) of the Investment Company Act of 1940

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

1. Name and Address of Reporting Person\*

Cox	Michael	L
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(Last)	(First)	(Middle)
905 North Meadow Lane		
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(Street)		
Muncie	IN	47304
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(City)	(State)	(Zip)

2. Issuer Name and Ticker or Trading Symbol

First Merchants Corporation - FRME

3. IRS Identification Number of Reporting Person, if an Entity (Voluntary)

###-##-####

4. Statement for Month/Day/Year

02/07/03

5. If Amendment, Date of Original (Month/Year)

6. Relationship of Reporting Person to Issuer  
(Check all applicable)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Director	<input type="checkbox"/> 10% Owner
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Officer (give title below)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify below)

President and Chief Executive Officer

7. Individual or Joint/Group Filing (Check applicable line)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Form filed by one Reporting Person
<input type="checkbox"/> Form filed by more than one Reporting Person

Table I -- Non-Derivative Securities Acquired, Disposed of,  
or Beneficially Owned

1. Title of Security (Instr. 3)	2. Transaction Date (mm/dd/yy)	3. Transaction Code (Instr. 8) ----- Code V	4. Securities Acquired (A) or Disposed of (D) (Instr. 3, 4 and 5)		5. Amount of Securities Beneficially Owned at End of Month (Instr. 3 and 4)	6. Owner- ship Form: Direct (D) or Indirect (I) (Instr.4)	7. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership (Instr. 4)
			Amount	or Price (A) or (D)			
Common	02/07/03	M	1,707.07	A		D	
Common	02/07/03	D	1,707.07	D	22.78	12,354	D

\* If the Form is filed by more than one Reporting Person, see Instruction 4(b)(v).

Reminder: Report on a separate line for each class of securities beneficially owned directly or indirectly.

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)	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 Underlying Securities (Instr. 3 and 4)	8. Price of Derivative Security (Instr. 5)	9. Number of Derivative Securities Beneficially Owned at End of Month (Instr. 4)	10. Ownership Form of Derivative Security: Direct (D) or Indirect (I) (Instr. 4)	11. Nature of Ownership: Direct Beneficial (Instr. 4)
Employee Stock Option (Right to Buy)								93,538	D	
Deferred Stock Units	1 for 1	02/07/03	M	1,707.07	02/07/03	02/07/03 Common	1,707.07	2,125.20	D	

\* Reporting person received \$2,993.21 from accumulated dividends on year 2000 deferred stock units.

/s/ Larry R. Helms  
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 \*\*Signature of Reporting Person  
 Michael L. Cox  
 (Confirming Statement on File)

February 10, 2003  
 -----  
 Date

\*\* 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 provided is insufficient, see Instruction 6 for procedure.