

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 10, 2016

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))

ITEM 8.01 OTHER EVENTS

On February 10, 2016, First Merchants Corporation issued a press release announcing the declaration of a cash dividend of \$0.11 per share. The cash dividend is payable on March 18, 2016 to stockholders of record as of March 4, 2016. 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 February 10, 2016 issued by First Merchants Corporation |
|--------------|---|

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 10, 2016

EXHIBIT INDEX

| <u>Exhibit No.</u> | <u>Description</u> |
|--------------------|--|
| 99.1 | Press Release, dated February 10, 2016 issued by First Merchants Corporation |

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

February 10, 2016

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 9, 2016 of \$0.11 per share, payable on March 18, 2016 to shareholders of record on March 4, 2016. For purposes of broker trading, the ex-date of the cash dividend is March 2, 2016.

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 and First Merchants Trust Company as divisions of First Merchants Bank, N.A.

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>).

FIRST MERCHANTS and the Shield Logo are federally registered trademarks of First Merchants Corporation.

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