

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP

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

1. Name and Address of Reporting Person
 HARTMEYER, JOHN W.
 2100 EAST WILLARD STREET
 MUNCIE, IN 47302
2. Issuer Name and Ticker or Trading Symbol
 FIRST MERCHANTS CORPORATION
 FRME
3. IRS or Social Security Number of Reporting Person (Voluntary)
 ###-##-####
4. Statement for Month/Year
 DECEMBER 1996
5. If Amendment, Date of Original (Month/Year)
6. Relationship of Reporting Person(s) to Issuer (Check all applicable)
 (X) Director () 10% Owner () Officer (give title below) () Other
 (specify below)
7. Individual or Joint/Group Filing (Check Applicable Line)
 (X) Form filed by One Reporting Person
 () Form filed by More than One Reporting Person

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

1. Title of Security	2. Transaction Date	3. Transaction Code	4. Securities Acquired (A) or Disposed of (D) Amount	5. Price	6. Amount of Securities Beneficially Owned at End of Month	7. Director (D) or Indirect (I)	8. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership
Common Stock	12-31-1996	G	V 1,050		840	D	
Common Stock	12-31-1996	G	V 105		105	I	Spouse-Cust. -- Son Dean Stutz
Common Stock	12-31-1996	G	V 105		105	I	Spouse-Cust. -- Son Wm. Stutz
Common Stock					1,850	I	Spouse
Common Stock					1,800	I	Hartmeyer Inc.
Common Stock					25,875	I	Al Pete Meats, Inc
Common Stock					4,050	I	Al Pete Enter. Inc.
Common Stock					675	I	Cust.-Step Son Dean Stutz
Common Stock					675	I	Cust. - Step Son Wm. Stutz
Common Stock					1,350	I	Cust. - Grandson Andrew Lutiz

Table II -- Derivative Securities Acquired, Disposed of, or Beneficially Owned

1. Title of Derivative Security	2. Conversion or Exercise Price of Derivative Security	3. Transaction Date	4. Transaction Code	5. Number of Derivative Securities Acquired (A) or Disposed of (D) Amount	6. Date Exercisable and Expiration Date (Month/Day/Year)	7. Title and Amount of Underlying Securities Title and Number of Shares	8. Price of Derivative Security	9. Number of Derivative Securities Beneficially Owned at End of Month	10. Director (D) or Indirect (I)	11. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership

Explanation of Responses:
 Reporting person resigned as a director of First Merchants Corporation effective midnight December 31, 1996.
 SIGNATURE OF REPORTING PERSON
 John W. Hartmeyer (Confirming Statement on File)
 DATE
 January 6, 1997