

FIRST FARMERS & MERCHANTS CORP  
Form DEF 14A  
March 31, 2010

UNITED STATES  
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION  
Washington, D.C. 20549

**SCHEDULE 14A**  
(Rule 14a-101)

SCHEDULE 14A INFORMATION

Proxy Statement Pursuant to Section 14(a) of  
the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (Amendment No. )

Filed by the Registrant

Filed by a Party other than the Registrant

Check the appropriate box:

- Preliminary Proxy Statement
- Confidential, for Use of the Commission Only (as permitted by Rule 14a-6(e)(2))**
- Definitive Proxy Statement
- Definitive Additional Materials
- Soliciting Material Pursuant to §240.14a-12

FIRST FARMERS AND MERCHANTS CORPORATION  
(Name of Registrant as Specified In Its Charter)

N/A  
(Name of Person(s) Filing Proxy Statement, if other than the Registrant)

Payment of Filing Fee (Check the appropriate box):

- No fee required.
- Fee computed on table below per Exchange Act Rules 14a-6(i)(1) and 0-11.
  - (1) Title of each class of securities to which transaction applies:
  - (2) Aggregate number of securities to which transaction applies:
  - (3) Per unit price or other underlying value of transaction computed pursuant to Exchange Act Rule 0-11 (set forth the amount on which the filing fee is calculated and state how it was determined):
  - (4) Proposed maximum aggregate value of transaction:
  - (5) Total fee paid:
- Fee paid previously with preliminary materials.
- Check box if any part of the fee is offset as provided by Exchange Act Rule 0-11(a)(2) and identify the filing for which the offsetting fee was paid previously. Identify the previous filing by registration statement number, or the Form or Schedule and the date of its filing.
  - (1) Amount Previously Paid:
  - (2) Form, Schedule or Registration Statement No.:
  - (3) Filing Party:
  - (4) Date Filed:



**FIRST FARMERS AND MERCHANTS CORPORATION**

COLUMBIA, TENNESSEE

**March 31, 2010**

Dear Shareholder:

The 2009 annual report to shareholders for First Farmers and Merchants Corporation and its bank subsidiary, First Farmers and Merchants Bank, is enclosed. Because this information will be discussed during the business session of our annual meeting, we encourage you to bring the annual report with you.

The official notice of the meeting of shareholders, proxy and proxy statement are enclosed. **PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN THE PROXY CARD AT YOUR EARLIEST CONVENIENCE.** If you attend the meeting, you will have the opportunity to withdraw your proxy and vote in person.

Please note that the annual meeting will be held in the Cherry Theater, in the Waymon L. Hickman Building at Columbia State Community College, Columbia, Tennessee on April 20, 2010 at 4:00 p.m. Central Time. Please indicate on your proxy if you will be attending the meeting.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ T. Randy Stevens

T. Randy Stevens  
Chairman of the Board and  
Chief Executive Officer

---

**FIRST FARMERS AND MERCHANTS CORPORATION**

816 South Garden Street, P.O. Box 1148, Columbia, Tennessee 38402-1148

**NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF SHAREHOLDERS**

To Be Held on the 20th day of April, 2010

To the Shareholders of First Farmers and Merchants Corporation:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual Meeting of Shareholders of First Farmers and Merchants Corporation (the Corporation) will be held at the Cherry Theater, in the Waymon L. Hickman Building, Columbia State Community College, Columbia, Tennessee, 38401 on April 20, 2010 at 4:00 p.m., Central Time, for the following purposes:

1. Election of Directors: Election of the following 16 nominees as directors of the Corporation:

Kenneth A. Abercrombie	Jonathan M. Edwards	Timothy E. Pettus	W. Lacy Upchurch
James L. Bailey, Jr.	Thomas Napier Gordon	Dr. Joseph W. Remke, III	William R. Walter
M. Darlene Baxter	Dr. O. Rebecca Hawkins	Matthew M. Scoggins, Jr.	Dan C. Wheeler
H. Terry Cook, Jr.	Dalton M. Mounger	T. Randy Stevens	Dr. David S. Williams

2. To transact such other business as may properly be brought before the annual meeting or any adjournment thereof.

Shareholders of record at the close of business on March 1, 2010 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

To assure that your shares are represented at the meeting, please mark, date, sign and promptly return the enclosed proxy card. The proxy is revocable and will not affect your right to vote in person in the event you are able to attend the meeting.

By order of the Board of Directors,

/s/ Martha M. McKennon

Martha M. McKennon  
Secretary

March 31, 2010

**FIRST FARMERS AND MERCHANTS CORPORATION**

**816 South Garden Street, P. O. Box 1148**

**Columbia, Tennessee 38402-1148**

**PROXY STATEMENT**

**ANNUAL MEETING OF SHAREHOLDERS**

To Be Held on the 20th day of April, 2010

The accompanying proxy is solicited by and on behalf of the Board of Directors of First Farmers and Merchants Corporation (the Corporation) for use at the Twenty-Eighth Annual Meeting of Shareholders to be held on April 20, 2010 and any adjournment thereof (the Annual Meeting). The time and place of the Annual Meeting are set forth in the accompanying Notice of Annual Meeting of Shareholders. All expenses of preparing, printing and mailing the proxy and all materials used in the solicitation thereof will be borne by the Corporation. In addition to the use of the mail, proxies may be solicited in person or by telephone by directors, officers and other personnel of the Corporation or its subsidiary, First Farmers and Merchants Bank (the Bank), none of whom will receive additional compensation for such services. The Corporation will also request custodians and nominees to forward soliciting materials to the beneficial owners of common stock of the Corporation, \$10.00 par value per share (Common Stock), held of record by them and will pay reasonable expenses of such persons for forwarding such material. The date on which this Proxy Statement and the accompanying proxy card are first being mailed to shareholders of the Corporation is March 31, 2010.

**PURPOSES OF THE MEETING**

The Annual Meeting will be held for the purposes of (i) electing directors and (ii) transacting whatever other business may properly be brought before the meeting or any adjournment thereof.

**QUORUM AND VOTING**

At the close of business on March 1, 2010, the Corporation had 5,506,993 shares of Common Stock issued and outstanding. Only holders of record of Common Stock at the close of business on March 1, 2010 are entitled to notice of and to vote on matters that properly come before the Annual Meeting or any adjournment thereof. A shareholder is entitled to one vote in person or by proxy at the Annual Meeting for each share of Common Stock held of record in his or her name.

The presence in person or by proxy of the holders of fifty (50) percent of the outstanding shares of Common Stock entitled to vote at the Annual Meeting is necessary to constitute a quorum at the Annual Meeting or any adjournment thereof. Abstentions (but not broker non-votes) are

Edgar Filing: FIRST FARMERS & MERCHANTS CORP - Form DEF 14A

included in determining the number of shares present in person or by proxy for purposes of determining if a quorum exists. Broker non-votes occur when a broker or nominee returns a proxy but does not have discretionary authority to vote on a particular proposal because it has not received voting instructions from the beneficial holder.

If a quorum is not present at the time of the Annual Meeting, the majority of shares entitled to vote, represented in person or by proxy, have the power to adjourn the Annual Meeting until a quorum shall be present or represented by proxy.

If the enclosed proxy is properly executed, returned and not revoked, it will be voted in accordance with the instructions, if any, given by the shareholder. Unless shares are held by a broker, if a proxy is executed and returned but no specification is made, the proxy will be voted **FOR** the election of

all nominees as directors of the Corporation. Please note that brokers no longer have the authority to vote shares on the election of directors in the absence of specific voting instructions from the beneficial holder. Nonetheless, shares subject to broker non-votes will not affect the outcome of the election of directors or other proposals properly brought before the Annual Meeting because the election of directors is decided by a plurality of the votes cast and, unless otherwise required by applicable law, other proposals properly brought before the Annual Meeting are approved if the votes cast in favor of the action exceed the votes cast against the action. Abstentions will also have no effect on the election of directors or any other proposals properly brought before the Annual Meeting.

Any shareholder has the power to revoke his or her proxy at any time, prior to the vote being taken at the Annual Meeting, by written notice or subsequently dated proxy received by the Corporation, or by revocation by the shareholder in person at the Annual Meeting or any adjournment thereof. If you wish to attend the Annual Meeting and need directions to the Cherry Theatre in the Waymon L. Hickman Building at Columbia State Community College, Columbia, Tennessee, please contact Martha McKennon, Secretary of the Corporation, at (931) 388-3145.



## ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors has nominated the 16 individuals below for election as directors to serve until the annual meeting of shareholders in 2011 or until their successors are qualified and elected. Article III, Section 2 of the Corporation's Amended and Restated By-laws (the Bylaws) provide that there shall be no fewer than five and no more than 20 directors. The Board of Directors believes it is in the best interest of the Corporation that there be 16 directors of the Corporation at this time. Proxies cannot be voted for a greater number of persons than the nominees named.

Directors are elected by a plurality of the votes cast by the shares of Common Stock entitled to vote at the Annual Meeting, if a quorum is present. Abstentions (but not broker non-votes) will be counted for purposes of determining the presence of a quorum at the Annual Meeting. Neither abstentions nor broker non-votes will have the effect of voting for or in opposition to a director. The Corporation's charter does not provide for cumulative voting and, accordingly, shareholders do not have cumulative voting rights with respect to the election of directors. Consequently, each shareholder of record may only cast one vote per share of Common Stock for each nominee.

Unless a proxy specifies otherwise or there is a broker non-vote, the persons named in the proxy will vote the shares covered thereby **FOR** the nominees listed below. Should any nominee become unavailable for election, shares covered by a proxy will be voted for a substitute nominee selected by the current Board of Directors.

Fourteen of the nominees are currently serving as directors and have served as a director since the 2009 annual meeting of shareholders. Directors are chosen based on their business skills, knowledge, experience, leadership skills and understanding of our business. Mr. Donald Wright, who is a present member of the board, has reached retirement age and, therefore, will not stand for re-election. The Board of Directors has nominated Jonathan M. Edwards and Dalton M. Mounger to serve on the Board, neither of whom has previously served in such capacity. Each nominee has consented to be a candidate and to serve as a director if elected.

Mr. Edwards has served as president and chief executive officer of the Edwards Group of Companies, including Edwards Oil Company of Lawrenceburg, Inc., Edwards Oil Company, Inc., South Tennessee Oil Company, Inc., Edwards Land Company L. P. and Edwards Real Estate, LLC since 1988. He is a Tennessee native and holds a bachelor's degree from the University of North Alabama. Mr. Edwards' other affiliations include the following: immediate past president and three-term board member of the Tennessee Fuel and Convenience Association; Chairman of the Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce (2006-2007); Columbia State Community College Foundation Board (2004-2007); First Farmers and Merchants Bank Advisory Board (2002 to present); Lawrence County Joint Community Industrial Development Board (1999 to present); Tennessee State Petroleum Underground Storage Tank Board (1996-2004); LifePoint Crockett Hospital Board (1999-2004); Texaco Orlando Regional Wholesale Council (1997-1999); Director of Alabama Oilmen's Association/Alabama Association of Convenience Stores (1996-1999); Bank of America Advisory Board (1993-2002); Tennessee Grocers Association Director (1990-1993); and First Baptist Church of Lawrenceburg, Tennessee. Mr. Edwards was nominated to be a member of the Board of Directors because of his business management and leadership skills.

Mr. Mounger is an attorney in private practice in Columbia, Tennessee and is a certified public accountant. He is currently serving as president of the Maury County Bar Association. Mr. Mounger holds a bachelor's and juris doctor degree from the University of Mississippi. Mr. Mounger's other affiliations include Maury Alliance, Maury County YMCA, Columbia State Community College Foundation Board, Columbia Main Street, Maury County Public Education Foundation Board, First Farmers and Merchants Bank Advisory Board and Columbia Central High School Academic Boosters.



Mr. Mounger was nominated to be a member of the Board of Directors because of his legal, accounting, and business management skills.

The following table provides the names, ages, positions and offices held with the Corporation and the Bank, the year in which each director nominee was first elected to the Board of Directors, the business experience of each director nominee during the last five years and any other boards of public companies in which they have served.

#### DIRECTOR NOMINEE INFORMATION TABLE

Name	Age	Position and office held with Corporation	Position and office held with Bank	Director of Corporation since	Business Experience during last five years
Kenneth A. Abercrombie(1)	67	Director	Director	1988	Retired President, Loretto Casket Co., Inc.
James L. Bailey, Jr.(2)	68	Director	Director	1982	Maury County Mayor Pharmacist (Self-employed)
M. Darlene Baxter(3)	63	Director	Director	2007	Retired Vice President, Maury Regional Hospital
H. Terry Cook, Jr.(4)	69	Director	Director	1982	President, Cook Properties, Inc.
Jonathan M. Edwards	49	*	*	N/A	CEO and President Edwards Group of Companies
Thomas Napier Gordon(5)	58	Director	Director	1986	Managing Partner, Gordon Brothers Properties
Dr. O. Rebecca Hawkins(6)	69	Director	Director	1999	Retired President, Columbia State Community College
Dalton M. Mounger	59	*	*	N/A	Attorney at Law
Timothy E. Pettus(7)	58	Director and President	Director and President	2007	President of the Corporation and the Bank
Dr. Joseph W. Remke, III(8)	59	Director	Director	1999	Optometrist (Self-employed)
Matthew M. Scoggins, Jr.(9)	60	Director	Director	2008	CEO, Tennessee Farmers Insurance Companies
T. Randy Stevens(10)	58	Director, Chairman and CEO	Director, Chairman and CEO	1991	Chairman and CEO of the Corporation and the Bank
W. Lacy Upchurch(11)	63	Director	Director	2007	President, Tennessee Farm Bureau; Farmer
William R. Walter(12)	68	Director	Director	2002	Retired Administrator and CEO, Maury Regional Hospital
Dan C. Wheeler(13)	67	Director	Director	1993	Retired Director, Center for Profitable Agriculture
Dr. David S. Williams(14)	63	Director	Director	2001	Orthodontist (Self-employed)

\* No previous service as a director of either the Corporation or the Bank.

- (1) Mr. Abercrombie was nominated to be a member of the Board of Directors because of his business skills and extensive experience as a director of the Corporation.
- (2) Mr. Bailey was nominated to be a member of the Board of Directors because of his leadership skills as County Mayor and a business owner and his extensive experience as a director of the Corporation.
- (3) Ms. Baxter was nominated to be a member of the Board of Directors because of her leadership skills and years of business experience as an executive officer of a regional hospital.
- (4) Mr. Cook was nominated to be a member of the Board of Directors because of his management and leadership skills developed from running his own business for over 30 years, his knowledge of business and finance and his extensive experience as a director of the Corporation.
- (5) Mr. Gordon was nominated to be a member of the Board of Directors because of his experience as an attorney and businessman and his extensive experience as a director of the Corporation.
- (6) Dr. Hawkins was nominated to be a member of the Board of Directors because of her leadership skills developed from her many years as an education administrator.
- (7) Mr. Pettus was nominated to be a member of the Board of Directors because of his 36 years experience in banking and his leadership skills and knowledge from serving as President of the Bank.
- (8) Dr. Remke was nominated to be a member of the Board of Directors because of his experience as a business owner.
- (9) Mr. Scoggins was nominated to be a member of the Board of Directors because of his leadership skills and his executive experience in the insurance industry.
- (10) Mr. Stevens was nominated to be a member of the Board of Directors because of his 36 years experience in banking, his position as CEO of the Corporation and the Bank and his leadership experience as a long-time director of the Bank, the Corporation, and other organizations.
- (11) Mr. Upchurch was nominated to be a member of the Board of Directors because of his leadership and business skills and his knowledge of the agriculture and insurance industry.
- (12) Mr. Walter was nominated to be a member of the Board of Directors because of his leadership skills and his experience as CEO of a regional hospital for over 20 years.
- (13) Mr. Wheeler was nominated to be a member of the Board of Directors because of his leadership in agricultural business and his experience as chair of the Bank's Audit Committee.
- (14) Dr. Williams was nominated to be a member of the Board of Directors because of his business and finance skills developed from owning a dental practice.

**The Board of Directors recommends that the shareholders vote FOR each of the nominees.**



## SECURITY OWNERSHIP OF CERTAIN BENEFICIAL OWNERS AND MANAGEMENT

The table below sets forth certain information, as of January 1, 2010, with respect to the beneficial ownership of our Common Stock by (i) each person known by us to be the beneficial owner of more than 5% of the outstanding shares of our Common Stock, (ii) each director and nominee, (iii) each of our Named Executive Officers (as identified in the section below entitled EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION Summary Compensation Table ) and (iv) all of our directors and executive officers as a group:

Name of Beneficial Owner	Amount and Nature of Beneficial Ownership (1)	Percent of Class
FAMCO (2)	644,157	11.697%
Thomas Napier Gordon (3)	136,648	2.481%
T. Randy Stevens (4)	75,000	1.362%
H. Terry Cook, Jr. (5)	49,912	*
James L. Bailey, Jr.	17,088	*
Dan C. Wheeler (6)	15,668	*
N. Houston Parks (7)	14,144	*
John P. Tomlinson, III (8)	12,900	*
Timothy E. Pettus (9)	12,367	*
Matthew M. Scoggins, Jr. (10)	7,574	*
Joseph W. Remke, III (11)	7,160	*
David S. Williams (12)	7,000	*
William R. Walter	5,428	*
Kenneth A. Abercrombie	5,000	*
W. Donald Wright (13)	4,832	*
M. Darlene Baxter	2,500	*
Jonathan M. Edwards (14)	1,600	*
Dr. O. Rebecca Hawkins	1,300	*
Dalton M. Mounger	400	*
Patricia P. Bearden (15)	429	*
W. Lacy Upchurch	400	*
Directors and Executive Officers as a Group (21)	376,950	6.85%

\* Less than 1%

- (1) Unless otherwise indicated, all shares are owned of record.
- (2) The Bank's address is 816 South Garden Street, Columbia, Tennessee 38401. These shares of Common Stock are held in a fiduciary capacity by the Bank's Trust and Financial Department ( FAMCO ) as trustee, agent or otherwise. The beneficial holders have the right to vote 100% of these shares. The shares voted by the Bank's Profit Sharing Benefit Committee on behalf of the beneficial holders will be voted in a manner consistent with the best interests of the beneficiaries as determined by the Bank in its fiduciary capacity.
- (3) Includes 18,120 shares held by Thomas Napier Gordon, Jr., Mr. Gordon's minor son, 18,120 shares held by Edward Bradshaw Gordon, Mr. Gordon's minor son and 800 shares held by Teri Hasenour Gordon, Mr. Gordon's wife.
- (4) Includes 2,000 shares held by Leesa M. Stevens, Mr. Stevens' wife, 36,000 shares held by Leesa M. Stevens Family Partnership, L.P., a limited partnership of which Mr. Stevens is a limited partner, and 35,800 shares held by Thomas Randall Stevens Family Partnership, L.P., a limited partnership of which Mr. Stevens is a limited partner.
- (5) Includes 16,308 shares held by Griffitha G. Cook, Mr. Cook's wife, 5,650 shares held by Cook Properties, Inc., of which Mr. Cook is president, and 500 shares held by FAMCO-IRA H. Terry Cook.
- (6) Includes 5,400 shares held by Mary Carol Wheeler, Mr. Wheeler's wife.
- (7) Includes 14,144 shares held by FAMCO in custody for N. Houston Parks and his wife, Suzanne C. Parks.
- (8) Includes 100 shares held by Teresa J. Beck, Mr. Tomlinson's wife, and 2,000 shares held by FAMCO IRA John P. Tomlinson.
- (9) Includes 1,500 shares held jointly by Timothy E. Pettus and Ellen Pettus, Mr. Pettus' mother, and 5,347 shares held by FAMCO IRA Timothy E. Pettus.
- (10) Includes 1,274 shares held by FAMCO IRA Matthew M. Scoggins, Jr. and 869 shares held by FAMCO IRA Mary P. Scoggins, in custody of Mr. Scoggins' wife.

Edgar Filing: FIRST FARMERS & MERCHANTS CORP - Form DEF 14A

- (11) Includes 4,100 shares held by FAMCO IRA Dr. Joseph W. Remke, III.
- (12) Includes 2,200 shares held by David S. Williams in a brokered account.
- (13) Not eligible to stand for re-election because of age requirement in Board s qualification standards.
- (14) Includes 800 shares held by Cynthia Leigh Edwards, Mr. Edward s wife.
- (15) Includes 119 shares held by FAMCO Roth IRA Patricia P. Bearden.

## EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

The biographical information of the executive officers of the Corporation and the Bank, as of March 1, 2010, is presented in the following paragraphs. None of these executive officers has a family relationship with any officer or employee of the Corporation or the Bank.

**T. Randy Stevens**, age 58, is Chairman of the Board of Directors, Chief Executive Officer and a director of the Corporation and the Bank. He has been employed by the Bank since 1973 and was promoted to Commercial Bank Officer in 1974. He was appointed Assistant Vice President in 1976 and promoted to Vice President in 1979. Mr. Stevens was appointed Vice President and Trust Officer of the Bank in 1982 and promoted to First Vice President in 1984. He was promoted to Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer of the Bank in 1990. Mr. Stevens was elected as a director of the Bank and the Corporation in 1991 and appointed Vice President of the Corporation in 1991. He was appointed President and Chief Operating Officer of the Bank, effective December 31, 1995, and President and Chief Operating Officer of the Corporation in April 1996. He was appointed Chief Executive Officer of the Bank and the Corporation in June 2002. He has been Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Corporation and the Bank since April 2005.

**Timothy E. Pettus**, age 58, is President and a director of the Corporation and the Bank. Mr. Pettus has been an officer of the Bank since July 2002. He served as the Vice Chairman of the Bank from April 2005 until his appointment as President of the Corporation and the Bank in January 2007. Mr. Pettus served as Regional President, Southern Region of the Bank, from July 2002 until becoming Vice Chairman of the Bank. From 1998 until July 2002, he was a senior banking executive with Bank of America in Lawrence County, Tennessee. He was first elected as a director of the Corporation and the Bank in January 2008.

**John P. Tomlinson, III**, age 59, is Chief Administrative Officer of the Bank. He has been employed by the Bank since 1973 and was promoted to Commercial Bank Officer in 1974. He was appointed Assistant Vice President of the Bank in 1976 and promoted to Vice President in 1979. Mr. Tomlinson was appointed Manager of Mortgage Lending in 1986 and promoted to Senior Vice President in 1990. He was appointed Executive Vice President of the Bank in 1995 and elected Secretary of the Corporation in April 1996. He was appointed Vice President of the Corporation in December 1996 and Senior Executive Vice President of the Bank in 1998. Mr. Tomlinson was appointed Senior Executive Vice President of the Corporation in 1999. He was appointed Chief Operating Officer in June 2002 and Regional President of the Bank in 2003. He served as President of the Corporation and the Bank from April 2005 to January 2007. In January 2007, he was named Chief Administrative Officer of the Bank. Mr. Tomlinson served as a director of the Corporation and the Bank from 2000 to 2008.

**N. Houston Parks**, age 60, is Treasurer of the Corporation and, effective as of January 2009, General Counsel of the Bank. He has been employed by the Bank since July 1997 and began as Senior Vice President and Senior Trust Officer. He was appointed Executive Vice President and Senior Trust Officer in 2002. He was promoted to Vice Chairman and Chief Operating Officer of the Bank in 2005 and was appointed Treasurer of the Corporation in April 2005.

**Patricia P. Bearden**, age 47, is Assistant Treasurer of the Corporation and Chief Financial Officer of the Bank. She has been employed by the Bank since 1998 and was promoted to Trust Officer in 2000. She was promoted to Vice President and Trust Officer in 2003. Ms. Bearden was appointed Chief Financial Officer of the Bank in 2005 and was appointed Assistant Treasurer of the Corporation in April 2005.

**Martha M. McKennon**, age 65, is Secretary of the Corporation and Secretary, Vice President and Executive Assistant of the Bank. She has been employed by the Bank since 1974 and was promoted to Customer Service Representative in 1980. She was appointed Executive Assistant of the Bank in 1984.





and Assistant Vice President, Executive Assistant in 1991. Ms. McKennon was appointed Assistant Secretary of the Corporation in December 1996 and appointed Vice President/Executive Assistant of the Bank in 1997. She was appointed Secretary of the Corporation in 1999 and Secretary to the Board of Directors of the Corporation and the Bank in 2000.

## **CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

### Director Qualifications

The Board of Directors has not established formal qualification guidelines for its members. The Board considers only potential nominees who have several years of relevant business experience. Non-management director nominees generally need to be independent, as defined by the listing standards of the New York Stock Exchange. Any nominee must be willing to serve for the nominal director's compensation paid by the Corporation. In addition, the Board of Directors evaluates nominees with the goal of maintaining a diversity of background and experience that complements the other directors.

Any shareholder, by written notice submitted to the Corporate Secretary, can nominate candidates for election to the Board of Directors of the Corporation. The written notice should be provided in accordance with the process contained in the Bylaws as more fully described in the

GENERAL INFORMATION Items of Business for 2011 Annual Meeting of Shareholders section of this Proxy Statement. Candidates nominated by shareholders are evaluated in the same manner as the candidates nominated by the Board of Directors.

### Director Independence

The Board has determined that 13 of its 15 directors are independent in accordance with the listing standards of the New York Stock Exchange. The two individuals who are not independent, Messrs. Stevens and Pettus, are both executive officers of the Corporation. In addition, the two new director nominees, Messrs. Edwards and Mounger, are independent in accordance with the listing standards of the New York Stock Exchange.

During 2009, there were no relationships or transactions that the Board of Directors discussed in making its independence determinations with respect to each director identified as independent and no relationships or transactions precluded any such directors from being independent. We are not aware of any family relationships among any of our directors and executive officers.

### Board Leadership Structure and Role in Risk Oversight and Management

Mr. Stevens has served as both the Chairman of the Board of Directors and the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation since 2005. The Board believes that a unified chairman and chief executive officer position has provided clarity of leadership and operating efficiencies. Additionally, Mr. Stevens' management experience and close relationship with the other officers of the Corporation improves the Board's effectiveness in its role of monitoring the management of the Corporation. The Board is actively involved in oversight of risks that could affect the Corporation. Although the full Board has retained responsibility for general oversight of risks, this oversight is conducted primarily through

## Edgar Filing: FIRST FARMERS & MERCHANTS CORP - Form DEF 14A

committees of the Board, as disclosed in the description of each of the committees below and in the charters of each of the committees. The Board receives full reports by each committee chair regarding the committee's considerations and actions, as well as regular reports directly from officers responsible for oversight of particular risks within the Corporation.

Committees of the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors conducts its business through its own meetings and through committees of the Bank's Board of Directors, which are described below. There are no standing committees of the Board of Directors of the Corporation because the principal business of the consolidated company is conducted by the Bank rather than the Corporation, which is a bank holding company.

The Corporation does not have a standing nominating committee. The entire Board of Directors of the Corporation fulfills the role of a nominating committee. Factors such as the Corporation's size and the nature of its business, the consistently high rate of participation in meetings by each director, the fact that over half of the Corporation's directors are independent (as defined by the listing standards of the New York Stock Exchange) and are individuals who come from diverse backgrounds, and the infrequent historical turnover in the membership of the Board of Directors contribute to the belief of the Board of Directors that a separate, independent nominating committee is not necessary. The entire Board of Directors serving as a nominating committee currently does not have a charter and, as noted above, not all of the directors are independent, as defined by the listing standards of the New York Stock Exchange.

The Bank's Board of Directors has six standing committees:

- Audit/Compliance/CRA Committee;
- Compensation Committee;
- Executive Committee;
- Oversight Committee; and
- Trust Committee;

The following table sets forth the current members of the committees of the Board of Directors of the Bank:

Edgar Filing: FIRST FARMERS & MERCHANTS CORP - Form DEF 14A

Name	Audit	Compensation	Executive	Oversight	Trust
Kenneth A. Abercrombie		X	X	X	
James L. Bailey, Jr.	X		X		
M. Darlene Baxter		X			
H. Terry Cook, Jr.		Chair	X	Chair	X
Thomas Napier Gordon					X
Dr. O. Rebecca Hawkins	X			X	
N. Houston Parks(1)					Chair
Timothy E. Pettus			X		
Dr. Joseph W. Remke, III	X				
Matthew M. Scoggins, Jr.(2)	X				
T. Randy Stevens		X	Chair		X
W. Lacy Upchurch					X
William R. Walter		X			X
Dan C. Wheeler	Chair	X		X	
Dr. David S. Williams	X				
W. Donald Wright	X	X	X		

---

(1) Non-director member of Trust Committee.

(2) Audit Committee financial expert.

*Audit/Compliance/CRA Committee*

Number of 2009 meetings: 11

The Bank has a separately designated standing Audit/Compliance/CRA Committee (the Audit Committee). This committee provides assistance to the Bank's Board of Directors in fulfilling its responsibilities related to internal control monitoring, accounting procedures, reporting practices, regulatory compliance and quality and integrity of the financial reports of the Bank. The charter of the Audit Committee was amended and restated during 2009. The new charter is attached as *Appendix A* to this Proxy Statement. The Audit Committee is composed solely of directors who are independent of the management of the Bank, based on the listing standards of the New York Stock Exchange, and are free of any relationship that, in the opinion of the Board of Directors, would interfere with their exercise of independent judgment as a committee member.

The Audit Committee's primary responsibilities fall into three broad categories:

- Monitoring the preparation of quarterly and annual financial reports prepared by the management of the Corporation and the Bank, which includes discussing draft financial statements and accounting and reporting matters with management and the Corporation's independent registered public accounting firm.
  
- Responsibility for matters concerning the relationship between the Corporation and the Bank and the Corporation's independent auditors. This relationship includes:
  - recommending the appointment or removal of the Corporation's independent auditors;
  
  - reviewing the scope of their audit services and related fees, as well as any other services being provided; and
  
  - determining whether the Corporation's auditors are independent.
  
- Overseeing management's implementation of effective systems of internal controls, including the review of the activities and recommendations of the Bank's internal auditing program.

The Audit Committee has implemented procedures to ensure that during the course of each fiscal year it devotes the attention that it deems necessary or appropriate to each of the matters assigned to it under the committee's charter.

*Compensation Committee*

Number of 2009 meetings: 4

## Edgar Filing: FIRST FARMERS & MERCHANTS CORP - Form DEF 14A

The Compensation Committee's primary duties and responsibilities include establishing and monitoring compensation and benefit plan policies of the Bank and making recommendations regarding compensation and benefits for the officers of the Bank. The Compensation Committee does not have a written charter. The Compensation Committee has the authority to conduct or authorize investigations into any matters within the scope of its responsibilities and has the authority to retain such outside counsel, experts, and other advisors as it deems appropriate to assist it in the conduct of any such investigation. This committee recommends to the Board of Directors of the Corporation and the Bank fees for board and committee meetings. The Compensation Committee reviews, evaluates and recommends to the Board of Directors of the Bank the officers compensation program and deferred profit-sharing contributions for all eligible employees.

### *Executive Committee*

Number of 2009 meetings: 29

The Executive Committee reviews and recommends to the Bank's Board of Directors for its approval selected actions with regard to the general direction and conduct of the Corporation and the

Bank. This committee acts on loan applications and reviews overdrafts, cash items, loans, lines of credit and loan reviews in accordance with the Bank's policies that have been approved by the Board of Directors.

*Oversight Committee*

Number of 2009 meetings: 4

The Oversight Committee ensures prompt action by the Bank in response to recommendations from, and reviews the results of examinations performed by, the Bank's regulatory agencies. It also reviews management's response to reports of examination and periodically monitors the action taken by management in response to examination findings.

*Trust Committee*

Number of 2009 meetings: 12

The Trust Committee supervises the operations of the Trust and Financial Management Department of the Bank to ensure proper exercise of the fiduciary powers of the Bank.

Directors Attendance at Meetings

The Board of Directors of the Corporation met four times during 2009. Each member of the Board of Directors of the Bank and the Corporation attended at least 75% of the aggregate meetings of the Board of Directors and committees of which he or she was a member.

The Corporation does not have a policy regarding director attendance at annual meetings of shareholders because of the willingness of each director to be present at all annual meetings and the historical attendance of each director. All directors attended the 2009 annual meeting of shareholders.

Shareholder Communication with the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors of the Corporation has adopted a process to facilitate written communications by shareholders or other interested parties to the Board of Directors. Persons wishing to write to the Board of Directors of the Corporation or a specified director or committee of the Bank Board of Directors should send correspondence to the Corporate Secretary at First Farmers and Merchants Corporation, P.O. Box 1148, Columbia, Tennessee, 38402-1148.

All communications properly received from shareholders or other interested parties will be forwarded to the members of the Board of Directors, or to a specific director or committee if so designated by such person. Any shareholder who wishes to communicate with a specific Board member should send instructions asking that the material be forwarded to the director. Solicitations, junk mail and frivolous communications will not be forwarded but will be made available to any director who wishes to review them.



Code of Ethics

The Board of Directors of the Corporation has not adopted a Code of Ethics, as defined by the rules and regulations of the SEC, because the principal business of the consolidated company is conducted by the Bank rather than the Corporation, which is a bank holding company. The Board of Directors of the Bank, however, has adopted a Code of Ethics for all employees of the Bank. A copy of this Code of Ethics can be obtained without charge by a written request to Human Resources Director, First Farmers and Merchants Bank, P.O. Box 1148, Columbia, Tennessee, 38402-1148.

## COMPENSATION DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The executive officers of the Corporation do not receive compensation for service as executive officers of the Corporation but instead receive compensation from the Bank for service as executive officers of the Bank. The Compensation Committee of the Bank designs and implements compensation programs to attract, retain and motivate officers, employees and directors by offering attractive and competitive compensation elements and amounts. These goals are balanced against the need to control expenses for the benefit of the shareholders of the Corporation. The compensation programs are designed to reward production and foster loyalty to the Bank and the Corporation. To be competitive, the Bank seeks to provide salaries and benefits comparable to the median of those provided by other banking companies of similar asset size in the Bank's peer group. The Bank strives to be competitive using peer benchmark analysis of current market levels of compensation. The Compensation Committee believes that, in large part because of the Bank's compensation system, it has been able to assemble a team of effective and productive officers and employees.

### General Compensation Philosophy

Decisions with respect to the compensation of the Bank's executive officers, including the Named Executive Officers, are made by the Compensation Committee. The Compensation Committee believes that the actions of each executive officer have the potential to impact the short-term and long-term profitability of the Corporation and the Bank. Consequently, the Compensation Committee places considerable importance on its task of designing and administering an executive compensation program.

The Bank has an executive compensation program that considers factors such as shareholder value and the overall performance of the Corporation and the Bank, as further described below under Cash Bonus Plan. The main components of the executive compensation program are base salary, cash bonus plan, employee benefits and perquisites. The Corporation and the Bank currently do not have an equity incentive compensation program. The Compensation Committee believes that an equity incentive program is not currently in the best interest of the Corporation or the Bank.

In determining the aggregate amount of base salary and cash bonus for the Named Executive Officers, the Compensation Committee considers compensation levels for the chief executive officer, the chief financial officer and other executive officer positions of peer financial institutions as published in annual compensation and benefits surveys conducted by the Tennessee Bankers Association. These surveys do not identify the specific banks or bank holding companies that participated in the survey, but do provide data for the participating institutions grouped according to asset size and geographic region. In its review of the aggregate amount of base salary and incentive bonus for the Named Executive Officers for 2009, the Compensation Committee primarily focused on data for financial institutions with an asset size of \$500 million to \$1 billion. The Corporation's compensation of its Named Executive Officers in 2009 generally was within the range of the median compensation levels of the peer group.

### Components of Compensation

#### *Base Salary*

## Edgar Filing: FIRST FARMERS & MERCHANTS CORP - Form DEF 14A

Base salary represents a fixed labor cost and is designed so that the executive officers receive acceptable salaries, helping the Bank keep talent needed to meet the challenges in the financial service industry. Many factors are included in determining base salaries such as job responsibilities, the scope of the position, length of service with the Bank, individual performance and compensation for similar positions in the Bank's peer group. All base salaries are reviewed annually. In August 2007, the Bank adopted a new salary administration program for determining base salary. In this system, all positions are assigned a position level and each position level has a salary range that is defined by a minimum, mid-point and maximum salary. The minimum of each salary range is typically 80% of the mid-point of the

applicable salary range and the maximum of each salary range is typically 120% of the mid-point. The Bank hired Koker Goodwin and Associates in 2007 to produce the salary ranges for each position level and the Compensation Committee plans to update the ranges annually in October of each year with respect to the following year based on several salary surveys. The salary ranges are adjusted for the Bank according to its asset size and geographic location. The salary ranges have been and will be used only as a guide for setting base salaries and will not reflect any incentive pay, benefits or other executive perquisites. All base salaries can be expressed as a percentage of the mid-point of the salary range applicable to each position level (the Compa-Ratio). In 2009, each of the Named Executive Officers received a base salary increase compared to 2008 base salary as follows, based on a combination of the above-mentioned factors:

Name	Salary Increase
T. Randy Stevens	7.50%
Patricia P. Bearden	7.10%
Timothy E. Pettus	10.00%
John P. Tomlinson, III	3.07%
N. Houston Parks	3.03%

For 2010, the base salary of each of the Named Executive Officers had the following Compa-Ratio:

Name	Compa-Ratio
T. Randy Stevens	97.1%
Patricia P. Bearden	83.6%
Timothy E. Pettus	101.5%
John P. Tomlinson, III	102.2%
N. Houston Parks	103.4%

The Compensation Committee has set the base salary for each of the Named Executive Officers for 2010 as follows:

Name	2010 Base Salary	Increase from 2009
T. Randy Stevens *	\$ 288,818	0.00%
Patricia P. Bearden	125,000	4.17%
Timothy E. Pettus *	220,000	0.00%
John P. Tomlinson, III	172,000	2.38%
N. Houston Parks	172,000	1.18%

---

\* Although the Compensation Committee determined that Messrs. Stevens and Pettus were eligible and deserving of a salary increase for 2010, Messrs. Stevens and Pettus each determined to decline any increase in 2010 base salary.

#### *Cash Bonus Plan*

The second component in the executive compensation program is a cash bonus plan. The cash bonus plan is used as a short-term incentive to drive achievement of annual Bank performance goals. This plan determines the bonuses for all executive officers as a percentage of their salary and is based on an evaluation of each executive's performance as well as the Bank's performance in various categories, including the following that were used in 2009:

- Return on assets;
- Delinquencies and non-accruals;

- Gross loan growth;
- Net deposit growth; and
- Net income.

During 2009, the Compensation Committee established performance goals under the cash bonus plan. The goals and actual performance for 2009 were as follows (dollars in thousands):

Performance Metric	2009 Goal	2009 Actual
Return on assets	≥ 1.15%	0.90%
Delinquencies and non-accruals	≤ 1.50%	2.82%
Gross loan growth	≥ 5.00%	3.00%
Net deposit growth	≥ 5.00%	5.00%
Net income	≥ \$9.10	\$ 8.60

Values were assigned to varying target levels of performance in each category so that the maximum performance goal in each category was worth 20% of the total potential bonus.

The sum of the percentages for all of the categories (which equals 100% if each maximum performance goal is achieved) was then multiplied by the potential maximum bonus percentage set by the Compensation Committee for each executive position, which maximum bonus percentage was higher for positions with more responsibility, as indicated below. The Compensation Committee establishes the maximum bonus percentages based on the position of each Named Executive Officer in accordance with four different levels: CEO; President; Senior Executive; and CFO. The resulting percentage was multiplied by the base salary for each Named Executive Officer and the product was the Named Executive Officer's bonus for 2009.

The following bonuses were paid to the Named Executive Officers based on achievement of the performance goals for 2009:

Name	Bonus	Actual Bonus as Percentage of Base Salary	Maximum Potential Bonus (Percentage of Base Salary)
T. Randy Stevens	\$ 193,557*	67%	70%
Patricia P. Bearden	13,200	11%	25%
Timothy E. Pettus	48,400	22%	50%
John P. Tomlinson, III	25,872	15%	35%
N. Houston Parks	26,180	15%	35%

\* Amount includes an additional \$100,000 discretionary bonus granted to Mr. Stevens by the Compensation Committee in recognition of Mr. Stevens' leadership.

## Edgar Filing: FIRST FARMERS & MERCHANTS CORP - Form DEF 14A

All of these bonuses were in the same range as the bonus levels of the Bank's peer group for executives with similar positions. The performance metrics have been established for 2010, which will be the same as the 2009 performance metrics.

### *Employee Benefits*

The Bank provides the following benefits for all employees of the Bank, including the Named Executive Officers:

- In 1996, the Bank established an officer group term replacement/split-dollar plan to provide life insurance benefits that continue after retirement. A single premium universal life insurance policy was purchased to fund the plan and a split-dollar agreement was made with an irrevocable trust that specified the portion of the insurance proceeds that would become part of the trust. For additional information, see the section below entitled Split-Dollar Arrangements and Deferred Compensation Agreements.
- The Bank offers health insurance, life insurance and disability insurance at a minimal cost to full-time employees and makes available health insurance for each employee's family, the premiums for which are shared by the employee and the Bank. Each employee receives personal copies of these insurance plans detailing the coverage provided. Any eligible employee who becomes disabled can continue coverage under the Bank's health insurance and life insurance plans. The disabled employee must pay the same premiums as employees who have the same coverage and who are actively at work. This coverage will continue to be provided by the Bank for the entire period of time that the employee is eligible and receives compensation under the Bank's group long-term disability insurance policy.
- The Bank has adopted the Deferred Profit Sharing Plan, which is a tax-qualified profit sharing retirement plan that has been approved by the Internal Revenue Service. All employees of the Bank are eligible to participate who are at least 20 years old and who have completed one year of service with the Bank. An individual account is maintained for participants to record contributions by the Bank on their behalf and adjustments for gains and losses on investments. Participant accounts are subject to forfeiture upon termination of employment prior to vesting. Accounts become vested over a period of six years, with 25% vested after two years of service, an additional 15% after the third year of service and 20% each year thereafter until the benefit is 100% vested at the end of sixth year. The Bank's contribution to the plan is determined by the annual performance of the Bank and is subject to annual approval by the Board of Directors of the Bank. Contributions are allocated to participant accounts pro rata to their compensation each year. The aggregate amount the Bank contributed to the Deferred Profit Sharing Plan for the 304 participants during 2009 was \$1,161,484.
- The Bank provides dental insurance coverage for all eligible employees and makes dental insurance available for eligible dependents at the employee's expense.
- The Bank pays for one physical examination each year for all officers of the Bank, including the Named Executive Officers. The Bank pays for flu immunizations annually for all officers and employees. Payment is made upon the presentation of an itemized statement from the physician providing the services.
- The Bank provides long-term disability insurance to eligible employees at no cost to the employee.
- The Bank offers a Cafeteria Plan under Internal Revenue Code Section 125 that gives employees the opportunity to pay for certain benefits on a pre-tax basis rather than on an after-tax basis. Expenses that are eligible for the Section 125 Plan include certain insurance premiums, certain out-of-pocket medical expenses and dependent care expenses. Money spent for these items included in the Section 125 Plan is not subject to Social Security or federal income taxes.



*Perquisites*

In addition to salaries, bonus opportunities and employee benefits, the Bank provides to certain executive officers, including four of the Named Executive Officers, certain perquisites so that the Bank remains competitive in its ability to hire and retain talented employees. These perquisites include the use of a company vehicle or a vehicle allowance, certain club memberships and the payment of dues for those clubs. The Bank currently provides these perquisites to all of the Named Executive Officers except Ms. Bearden. The Bank's policy for providing perquisites is based on the number of years of experience within the banking industry and the executive's position with the Bank. The Compensation Committee periodically reviews perquisites that are made available to the executive offers, including the Chief Executive Officer, to ensure that they are in line with market practice.

*Split-Dollar Arrangements and Deferred Compensation Agreements*

The Bank provides certain split-dollar insurance arrangements to fund death benefits (the Plan) for directors and certain officers of the Bank in order to encourage their continued employment and service with the Bank and to reward them for their past service and contribution. The Bank has purchased bank-owned life insurance policies covering the lives of its directors and the Named Executive Officers, with an aggregate premium amount of \$833,000 in 2009. The Bank is the sole owner of and the primary beneficiary of these life insurance policies and recognizes the increase of the cash surrender value of the policies as tax-exempt other income.

The Bank has entered into separate agreements with each of its directors and the Named Executive Officers relating to the Plan. For the directors, each participant is entitled to designate a beneficiary to receive an amount of death benefits equal to the lesser of \$100,000 or the net-at-risk insurance portion of the proceeds (defined as total proceeds minus the cash surrender value of the policy). For the Named Executive Officers, each participant is entitled to designate a beneficiary to receive an amount of death benefits equal to the lesser of two and one-half times the participant's base annual salary at the effective date of the Plan or the net-at-risk insurance portion of the proceeds. A director or Named Executive Officer shall forfeit his or her right to the benefits provided by this Plan if he or she is terminated for cause, removed under certain other circumstances or violates the non-compete or confidentiality restrictive covenants contained in his or her agreement with the Bank. The non-compete provisions generally provide that the Plan participant may not, without the prior written consent of the Corporation, directly or indirectly (i) become employed by, participate in or be connected in any manner with the ownership, management, operation or control of any bank, savings and loan or similar financial institution if the participant's responsibilities will include providing banking or other financial services within a 25-mile radius of any office maintained by the Corporation as of the date of termination of service, (ii) participate in any way in hiring or otherwise engaging, or assisting any other person in hiring or otherwise engaging, any individual who was employed by the Corporation as of the date of termination of service, (iii) assist, advise or serve in any capacity any third party in any action against or transaction involving the Corporation, or (iv) sell, offer to sell, provide banking or other financial services, assist any other person in selling or providing banking or other financial services, or solicit or otherwise compete for any orders, contract or accounts for services of a kind or nature like or substantially similar to those sold by the Corporation to or from any person from whom the participant or the Corporation, to the knowledge of the participant, provided banking or other financial services or such other services during the three-year period immediately prior to the termination of the participant's service.

Because Messrs. Pettus and Stevens are directors and Mr. Tomlinson is a former director, each of them also has Director Deferred Compensation Agreements. For a description of these agreements, see the section below entitled Compensation of Directors Deferred Compensation Agreements and Split-Dollar Arrangements.

*Group Term Carve-Out Plans*

The Bank owns certain life insurance policies on the lives of participating executive officers and pays the premiums on these policies. Under the Bank's Group Term Carve-Out Plans, the Bank has agreed to pay certain death proceeds under these life insurance policies to a beneficiary designated by each participating executive. In general, if a participant dies while employed by the Bank, the participant's beneficiary will be entitled to a benefit equal to two and one-half times the deceased participant's base annual salary at the effective date of the plan. All of the Named Executive Officers participate in the Bank's 2002 Group Term Carve-Out Plan except Ms. Bearden, who participates in the Bank's 2007 Group Term Carve-Out Plan. The Named Executive Officers' beneficiaries are entitled to the following respective benefits under the Group Term Carve-Out Plans:

Name	Benefit Under Group Term Carve-Out Plan
T. Randy Stevens	\$ 450,000
Patricia P. Bearden	262,500
Timothy E. Pettus	250,000
John P. Tomlinson, III	325,000
N. Houston Parks	250,000

Risk Management Considerations

The Compensation Committee believes that the Bank's performance-based cash bonus program creates incentives to create long-term shareholder value. Several elements of the program are designed to promote the creation of long-term value and thereby discourage behavior that leads to excessive risk:

- Rather than determining cash bonus awards based on a single metric, the Compensation Committee applies a structured, principled framework that considers a balanced set of financial performance metrics that collectively best indicate successful management; and
- The performance metrics used to determine the amount of an executive's bonus are metrics that the Compensation Committee believes drive long-term shareholder value. Moreover, the Compensation Committee attempts to set goals for these metrics that encourage success without encouraging excessive risk taking to achieve short-term results.

In addition, under the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002, if the Corporation is required to restate its financial results as a result of material noncompliance with financial reporting requirements under the securities laws as a result of misconduct, the chief executive officer and the chief financial officer must generally repay any bonus or other incentive-based compensation (including profits realized from the sale of Corporation common stock) received during the 12-month period following the filing of the erroneous financial results.

The Bank generally uses the same performance metrics for its cash bonus programs for the Named Executive Officers, other executive officers and non-executive employees.

## Edgar Filing: FIRST FARMERS & MERCHANTS CORP - Form DEF 14A

Management and the Compensation Committee periodically evaluate the risks involved with all compensation programs and do not believe that any of the Bank's compensation programs create risks that are reasonably likely to pose a material adverse impact to the Corporation.

### Named Executive Officer Compensation

The executive compensation program described above is applied in setting the Named Executive Officer's compensation. The Compensation Committee reviews the executive compensation program in

relation to the performance of the Corporation's net income. Mr. Stevens participates in the same executive compensation program available to the other Named Executive Officers. Although Mr. Stevens is a member of the Compensation Committee, he does not participate in discussions regarding his compensation as the Chief Executive Officer of the Bank. None of the Named Executive Officers have employment, severance or change-of-control agreements. The Named Executive Officers serve at the will of the Board of Directors, which enables the Bank to terminate their employment with discretion as to the terms of any severance arrangement. This is consistent with the Bank's performance-based philosophy.

Conclusion

The Compensation Committee believes that this mix of market-based salaries, cash bonuses, employee benefits and perquisites represents a balance that will motivate the management team to continue to produce strong returns. The Compensation Committee further believes this program strikes an appropriate balance with the interests and needs of the Corporation and the Bank in operating a financial service business.

**COMPENSATION COMMITTEE REPORT**

The Compensation Committee of the Board of Directors of the Bank has reviewed and discussed the Compensation Discussion and Analysis required by SEC Regulation S-K, Item 402(b) with management. Based on our review and discussions, the Compensation Committee recommended to the Board of Directors of the Bank, who recommended to the Board of Directors of the Corporation, that the Compensation Discussion and Analysis be included in this Proxy Statement and be incorporated by reference in the Corporation's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2009.

*Compensation Committee of the Bank's Board of Directors:*

H. Terry Cook, Jr., Chairman  
Kenneth A. Abercrombie  
M. Darlene Baxter  
T. Randy Stevens  
William R. Walter  
Dan C. Wheeler  
W. Donald Wright



## EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Summary Compensation Table

The following table sets forth the aggregate remuneration accrued or paid by the Bank during the three fiscal years ended December 31, 2009 to the Named Executive Officers:

Name and Principal Position	Year	Salary	Bonus	Stock Awards	Option Awards	Non-Equity Incentive Plan Compensation	Change in Pension Value and Nonqualified Deferred Compensation Earnings	All Other Compensation(1)	Total Compensation
T. Randy Stevens <i>Chairman of the Board,</i>	2009	\$ 288,818	\$ 193,557	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$ 114,384	\$ 596,759
<i>Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation and the Bank</i>	2008	268,668	134,401					176,885	579,954
Patricia P. Bearden <i>Assistant Treasurer of the Corporation and Chief Financial Officer of the Bank</i>	2007	244,668	55,050					186,215	485,933
	2009	120,000	13,200					18,693	151,893
	2008	112,000	20,160					21,584	153,744
Timothy E. Pettus <i>President of the Corporation and the Bank</i>	2007	105,000	11,813					17,408	134,221
	2009	220,000	48,400					59,720	328,120
	2008	200,000	72,000					55,244	327,243
John P. Tomlinson, III <i>Chief Administrative Officer of the Bank</i>	2007	172,000	27,090					22,496	221,586
	2009	168,000	25,872					41,017	234,889
	2008	163,000	41,076					44,457	248,533
N. Houston Parks <i>Treasurer of the Corporation and General Counsel of the Bank</i>	2007	163,000	25,673					61,745	250,418
	2009	170,000	26,180					37,295	233,475
	2008	165,000	41,580					40,945	247,525
	2007	160,000	27,090					30,582	217,672

(1) All other compensation for 2009 includes the following amounts:

Name and Principal Position	Fees for Services as Directors (a)	Contributions to Deferred Profit Sharing Plan	Imputed Income on Group Carve Out Plan	Personal Use of Company Automobile	Club Membership and Dues	Physical Exams	Total
T. Randy Stevens	\$ 76,001	\$ 25,725	\$ 3,113	\$ 2,859	\$ 5,728	\$ 958	\$ 114,384
Patricia P. Bearden	5,300	12,600	480		313		18,693
Timothy E. Pettus	26,936	23,100	1,237	128	8,319		59,720
John P. Tomlinson, III	11,690	17,640	2,575	8,400	120	592	41,017
N. Houston Parks	5,300	17,850	1,627	8,400	4,118		37,295

Edgar Filing: FIRST FARMERS & MERCHANTS CORP - Form DEF 14A

(a) Fees for service by Named Executive Officers on the Board of Directors of the Corporation and the Bank and certain committees of the Board of Directors of the Bank during the year ended December 31, 2009 are reflected in the following table:

Name	Fees Earned or Paid in Cash	Stock Awards	Option Awards	Non-Equity Incentive Plan Compensation	Change in Pension Value and Nonqualified Deferred Compensation Earnings*	All Other Compensation	Total
T. Randy Stevens	\$ 31,700	\$	\$	\$	\$ 44,301	\$	\$ 76,001
Patricia P. Bearden **	5,300						5,300
Timothy E. Pettus	24,325				2,611		26,936
John P. Tomlinson, III							
**					11,690		11,690
N. Houston Parks **	5,300						5,300

\* Represents interest earned on deferred compensation accounts and/or earnings on compensation that is deferred on a basis that is not tax-qualified.

\*\* Ms. Bearden and Messrs. Tomlinson and Parks were not directors but received fees for attending board meetings.



Potential Payments Upon Termination or Change-in-Control

The Bank has entered into certain agreements and maintains certain plans that will require it to provide compensation to Named Executive Officers in the event of death. The amount of compensation payable to each Named Executive Officer as beneficiary if each corresponding executive on December 31, 2009 is listed in the tables below.

*Mr. Stevens*

<b>Executive Benefits and Payments upon Termination</b>	<b>Retirement</b>	<b>Involuntary Termination without Cause</b>	<b>Involuntary Termination for Cause</b>	<b>Termination Related to Change in Control</b>	<b>Death or Disability</b>
Cash Payments	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$ 1,235,889(1)
Insurance Benefits					
Excise Tax Gross-up					

*Ms. Bearden*

<b>Executive Benefits and Payments upon Termination</b>	<b>Retirement</b>	<b>Involuntary Termination without Cause</b>	<b>Involuntary Termination for Cause</b>	<b>Termination Related to Change in Control</b>	<b>Death or Disability</b>
Cash Payments	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$ 262,500(2)
Insurance Benefits					
Excise Tax Gross-up					

*Mr. Pettus*

<b>Executive Benefits and Payments upon Termination</b>	<b>Retirement</b>	<b>Involuntary Termination without Cause</b>	<b>Involuntary Termination for Cause</b>	<b>Termination Related to Change in Control</b>	<b>Death or Disability</b>
Cash Payments	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$ 1,162,000(1)
Insurance Benefits					
Excise Tax Gross-up					

*Mr. Tomlinson*

<b>Executive Benefits and Payments upon Termination</b>	<b>Retirement</b>	<b>Involuntary Termination without Cause</b>	<b>Involuntary Termination for Cause</b>	<b>Termination Related to Change in Control</b>	<b>Death or Disability</b>

Edgar Filing: FIRST FARMERS & MERCHANTS CORP - Form DEF 14A

Cash Payments	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	1,081,787(3)
Insurance Benefits						
Excise Tax Gross-up						

Mr. Parks

Executive Benefits and Payments upon Termination	Retirement	Involuntary Termination without Cause	Involuntary Termination for Cause	Termination Related to Change in Control	Death or Disability
Cash Payments	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$ 250,000(4)
Insurance Benefits					
Excise Tax Gross-up					

(1) The amounts shown reflect a payment to the Named Executive Officer's beneficiary equal to the sum of (i) an amount equal to the lesser of two and one-half times the Named Executive Officer's base annual salary at the effective date of the arrangement or the net-at-risk insurance portion of the proceeds under a split-dollar arrangement (i.e., total proceeds minus the cash surrender value of the policy), plus (ii) an amount equal to the greater of the Named Executive Officer's deferral account balance under a Director Deferred Compensation Agreement with the Corporation or a fixed amount based on actuarial calculations, plus (iii) an amount equal to the greater of the Named Executive Officer's deferral account balance under a Director Deferred Compensation Agreement with the Bank or a fixed amount based on

actuarial calculations, plus (iv) an amount equal to two and one-half times the Named Executive Officer's base salary as set forth in the Bank's 2002 Group Term Carve-Out Plan.

(2) The amount shown reflects a payment to Ms. Bearden's beneficiary in an amount equal to two and one-half times Ms. Bearden's base salary as set forth in the Bank's 2007 Group Term Carve-Out Plan.

(3) The amount shown reflects a payment to Mr. Tomlinson's beneficiary equal to the sum of (i) an amount equal to the greater of Mr. Tomlinson's deferral account balance under a Director Deferred Compensation Agreement with the Corporation or a fixed amount based on actuarial calculations, plus (ii) an amount equal to the greater of Mr. Tomlinson's deferral account balance under a Director Deferred Compensation Agreement with the Bank or a fixed amount based on actuarial calculations, plus (iii) an amount equal to two and one-half times Mr. Tomlinson's base salary as set forth in the Bank's 2002 Group Term Carve-Out Plan.

(4) The amount shown reflects a payment to Mr. Parks' beneficiary in an amount equal to two and one-half times Mr. Parks' base salary as set forth in the Bank's 2002 Group Term Carve-Out Plan.

## COMPENSATION OF DIRECTORS

The following table summarizes the compensation of the non-management directors for the Bank and the Corporation during the year ended December 31, 2009.

Name(1)	Fees Earned or Paid in Cash	Stock Awards	Option Awards	Non-Equity Incentive Plan Compensation	Change in Pension Value and Nonqualified Deferred Compensation Earnings(2)	All Other Compensation	Total
Kenneth Abercrombie	\$ 28,500	\$	\$	\$	\$ 25,549	\$	\$ 54,049
James L. Bailey, Jr.	30,325				34,573		64,898
M. Darlene Baxter	13,800				2,337		16,137
H. Terry Cook	38,700				45,870		84,570
Tom Napier Gordon	23,250						23,250
Dr. O. Rebecca Hawkins	18,200				14,390		32,590
Dr. Joseph W. Remke, III	16,600				12,101		28,701
Matthew M. Scoggins, Jr.	17,850						17,850
W. Lacy Upchurch	16,875				2,527		19,402
William R. Walter	28,175				11,456		39,631
Dan C. Wheeler	21,325				27,223		48,548
Dr. David S. Williams	16,200				10,511		26,711
W. Donald Wright	30,100				25,412		55,512

(1) Messrs. Stevens and Pettus receive compensation for serving as members of the Board of Directors of the Corporation and the Bank and certain committees of the Bank Board as described above in the section entitled EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION Summary Compensation Table.

(2) Represents interest earned on deferred compensation accounts.

During 2009, each director of the Corporation received an annual retainer of \$3,000 and was paid a fee of \$575 for each Board meeting attended. Each Bank director received \$575 for each Bank Board of Directors meeting attended and each honorary Bank director received \$400 for each Bank Board of Directors meeting attended. The following Bank advisory directors received \$325 for each Bank Board of Directors meeting attended: Dr. A. Lee Hunter; James D. Langsdon; H. Thomas Lucas; Emily McKnight; Dalton Mounger; Trent Ogilvie; Robert Otwell; John R. Parkes; Janet Smith; Dr. Bill Thrasher; and J. Cliff Walker. Each member of the Bank's Executive Committee received \$400 for each meeting attended. Each committee chair received \$575 and each committee member received \$400 for attendance at any scheduled or formally called committee meeting of any standing or specially appointed committee. No payment was received for participation in Board or committee meetings by telephone. Directors of the Corporation and the Bank may defer fees payable to them under the Corporation's and Bank's Directors Deferred Compensation Plans. During 2009, the Corporation and the Bank together paid total cash directors' fees of \$193,500 and directors' fees in the amount of \$291,525 were deferred. The method of compensating directors is the same for management and non-management directors.

Deferred Compensation Agreements and Split-Dollar Arrangements

Directors of the Corporation may defer fees payable to them for their service as directors by entering into a Director Deferred Compensation Agreement with the Corporation. Directors of the Bank may defer fees under similar agreements with the Bank. Under these agreements, a director may defer all or some portion of his or her director's fees. Amounts so deferred are accounted for separately on the

books of the Corporation or the Bank, as the case may be, segregated from other assets owned by the applicable entity and subject to the claims of general creditors of the applicable entity. Deferred amounts generally earn interest at *The Wall Street Journal*'s published prime rate on the last day of the previous calendar year plus 300 basis points. Deferred amounts are generally payable to the director on the first to occur of (i) termination of the director's Board service for reasons other than death or (ii) termination of the corresponding Director Deferred Compensation Agreement. If, however, the director dies while serving on the Board of Directors, his beneficiary will be paid the greater of the deferred amount or the projected benefit, which is a fixed amount based on actuarial calculations. Hardship payments may be made out of the deferred amounts in the sole discretion of the Board of Directors upon request of a director. These agreements may be terminated by the Corporation or the Bank, as the case may be, at any time upon 90 days' advance written notice to the effected director. In general, the agreements have similar terms but not all of the agreements have identical terms.

For a description of the split-dollar arrangements with the directors, see the section above entitled "Compensation Discussion and Analysis Components of Composition Split-Dollar Arrangements and Deferred Compensation Agreements."

Based on the terms of the Director Deferred Compensation Agreements and the Director Split-Dollar Agreements, the directors of the Corporation have the following death benefits:

Name	Benefit Under Split-Dollar Agreement with Bank	Benefit Under Deferred Compensation Agreement with Bank	Benefit Under Deferred Compensation Agreement with Corporation	Total Benefit
Kenneth Abercrombie	\$ 100,000	\$ 318,022	\$ 190,212	\$ 608,234
James L. Bailey, Jr.	100,000	559,097	200,632	859,729
M. Darlene Baxter		176,500	92,500	269,000
Hulet M. Chaney				
H. Terry Cook		611,978	154,907	766,885
Tom Napier Gordon				
Dr. O. Rebecca Hawkins	100,000	173,381	89,529	362,910
Timothy E. Pettus		750,000	162,000	912,000
Dr. Joseph W. Remke, III	100,000	658,340	376,797	1,135,137
Matthew M. Scoggins, Jr.				
T. Randy Stevens	100,000	483,289	202,600	785,889
John P. Tomlinson, III(1)		465,090	291,697	756,787
W. Lacy Upchurch		163,000	85,500	248,500
William R. Walter	100,000	147,752	84,854	332,606
Dan C. Wheeler	100,000	375,317	187,281	662,598
Dr. David S. Williams	100,000	274,621	166,189	540,810
W. Donald Wright	100,000	279,111	97,824	376,935

(1) Mr. Tomlinson is not a current director but, as a former director who served from 2000 to 2008, entered into a Deferred Compensation Agreement with each of the Bank and the Corporation.

## **COMPENSATION COMMITTEE INTERLOCKS AND INSIDER PARTICIPATION**

Messrs. Abercrombie, Baxter, Cook, Stevens, Walter, Wheeler and Wright served as members of the Bank's Compensation Committee throughout 2009. Mr. Stevens serves as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Bank and the Corporation and Chief Executive Officer of the Bank and the Corporation. None of the other members of the Compensation Committee, however, have at any time been an officer or employee of the Corporation or the Bank, nor have any of the members had any other relationship requiring disclosure by the Corporation. During 2009, none of the executive officers of the Bank or the Corporation served as a member of another entity's compensation committee, one of whose executive officers served on the Bank's Compensation Committee or was a director of the Corporation, and none of the executive officers of the Bank or the Corporation served as a director of another entity, one of whose executive officers served on the Bank's Compensation Committee. Members of the Compensation Committee may, from time to time, have banking relationships in the ordinary course of business with the Bank, as described in the section entitled "RELATED PERSON TRANSACTIONS."

## **RELATED PERSON TRANSACTIONS**

During 2009, the Bank engaged in customary banking transactions and had outstanding loans to certain of the Corporation's and Bank's directors, including Messrs. Abercrombie, Stevens, Wheeler and Wright, and members of the immediate families of such directors. Messrs. Abercrombie, Stevens, Wheeler and Wright, their affiliates, families and companies in which they hold 10% or more ownership had outstanding loan balances of \$1,016,016 at December 31, 2009. These loans were made in the ordinary course of business, were made on substantially the same terms, including interest rates and collateral, as those prevailing at the time for comparable transactions with other borrowers, and did not involve more than the normal risk of collectability or present other unfavorable features.

Neither the Corporation nor the Bank has any written policies or procedures for the review, approval or ratification of any related person transaction required to be reported. Nonetheless, management of the Corporation and the Bank is responsible for reviewing and approving any transaction between the Corporation or the Bank and any director or officer of the Corporation, the Bank or members of their immediate family or entities with which they are affiliated. In addition, on an annual basis each director and executive officer of the Corporation and the Bank is obligated to complete a Director and Officer Questionnaire, which requires the director or executive officer to disclose any related person transactions or business relationships involving the Corporation or its subsidiaries that are required to be disclosed pursuant to Item 404 of SEC Regulation S-K. During 2009, there were no transactions with related persons other than the loans described above.





**AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT**



## Edgar Filing: FIRST FARMERS & MERCHANTS CORP - Form DEF 14A

In overseeing the preparation of the Corporation's and the Bank's financial statements, the Audit Committee met with both management and the Corporation's independent registered public accounting firm to review and discuss all financial statements prior to their issuance and to discuss significant accounting issues. The Corporation files consolidated financial statements that include the financial condition and results of operation of the Bank for the periods indicated. In addition, the Audit Committee took the following actions:

(i) Management advised the Audit Committee that all financial statements were prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

(ii) The Audit Committee discussed with the Corporation's independent registered public accounting firm the matters required to be discussed pursuant to Auditing Standards No. 61 as amended (AICPA Professional Standards, Vol. 1 AU section 380), as adopted by the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board in Rule 3200T.

(iii) The Audit Committee also received the written disclosures and the letter from the Corporation's independent registered public accounting firm regarding the independence of such accountants as required by the applicable requirements of the Public Accounting Oversight Board regarding the independent accountant's communications with the Audit Committee concerning independence, and has discussed with such accountants their independence from the Corporation and its management.

(iv) Based on its review and discussions with the Bank's management and the Corporation's independent registered public accounting firm, the Audit Committee recommended to the Bank's Board of Directors, who recommended to the Corporation's Board of Directors, approval of the inclusion of the audited consolidated financial statements of the Corporation and its subsidiary, the Bank, in its Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2009 for filing with the SEC.

*Audit Committee of the Bank's Board of Directors:*

Dan C. Wheeler, Chairman

James L. Bailey, Jr.

Dr. O. Rebecca Hawkins

Dr. Joseph W. Remke, III

Matthew M. Scoggins, Jr.

Dr. David S. Williams

W. Donald Wright

**INDEPENDENT REGISTERED PUBLIC ACCOUNTING FIRM**



## Edgar Filing: FIRST FARMERS & MERCHANTS CORP - Form DEF 14A

Upon the recommendation of the Audit Committee of the Bank, the firm of KraftCPAs PLLC has been selected by the Board of Directors of the Corporation to serve as the Corporation's independent registered public accounting firm for 2010. The Board of Directors of the Bank has also chosen KraftCPAs PLLC as its independent registered public accounting firm. A representative of KraftCPAs PLLC will be present at the Annual Meeting and will have the opportunity to make a statement if he or she so desires and will be available to respond to appropriate questions from shareholders in attendance.

During the period covering the fiscal years ended December 31, 2009 and 2008, KraftCPAs PLLC performed the following professional services that were approved by the Audit Committee:

	2009		2008
Audit Fees(1)	\$ 172,250	\$	187,295
Audit-Related Fees(2)	8,474		8,340
Tax Fees(3)	14,500		13,500
All Other Fees(4)	4,465		850
	\$ 199,689	\$	209,985

---

(1) Fees for professional services rendered by KraftCPAs PLLC in connection with the audit of the Corporation's consolidated annual financial statements, the audit of internal controls over financial reporting (pursuant to Section 404 of Sarbanes-Oxley) and reviews of the interim condensed consolidated financial statements included in the Corporation's quarterly reports on Form 10-Q for the first three fiscal quarters of the fiscal years ended December 31, 2008 and 2009.

(2) Fees for services rendered by KraftCPAs PLLC for audit of pension plan.

(3) Fees for services rendered by KraftCPAs PLLC for assistance with tax compliance regarding tax filings and also for other tax advice and consulting services.

(4) Other fees for services consisted of consultations regarding future modification in REIT taxation, non-accrual interest tax election matters, and regulations regarding amortization of computer related costs for tax purposes.

Before KraftCPAs PLLC was engaged by the Bank, an engagement letter was submitted and approved by the Audit Committee. The aggregate amount of \$199,689 paid for such services does not constitute more than 5% of the total amount of the revenue paid by the Bank to KraftCPAs PLLC during the years ended December 31, 2009 and 2008.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**





Other Matters



## Edgar Filing: FIRST FARMERS & MERCHANTS CORP - Form DEF 14A

As of the date of this Proxy Statement, the management of the Corporation and the Bank knows of no other business that will be presented at the Annual Meeting.

### Section 16(a) Beneficial Ownership Reporting Compliance



## Edgar Filing: FIRST FARMERS & MERCHANTS CORP - Form DEF 14A

Section 16(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, requires the Corporation's executive officers, directors and beneficial owners of more than 10% of the Common Stock to file reports of ownership and changes in ownership with the SEC. Such executive officers, directors and greater than 10% shareholders are also required to furnish the Corporation with copies of all Section 16(a) reports that they file. Based solely on a review of (1) the applicable filings, and any amendments thereto, made with the SEC and posted on the SEC's EDGAR website and (2) written representations from the Corporation's executive officers and directors, the Corporation believes that all reports were filed in a timely manner during 2009, except that Mr. Pettus filed a late Form 4 on April 1, 2009 with respect to shares owned by a family member who granted Mr. Pettus power of attorney on March 13, 2009.

### Items of Business for 2011 Annual Meeting of Shareholders



## Edgar Filing: FIRST FARMERS & MERCHANTS CORP - Form DEF 14A

The Bylaws provide that nominations of persons for election of directors and proposals of business to be transacted by the shareholders at an annual meeting of shareholders may be made by any shareholder of record who is entitled to vote and who provides timely and proper notice. In order to be considered timely, a shareholder's notice must be received by the Secretary at the principal office of the Corporation not earlier than the close of business on the date which is 120 calendar days and not later than the close of business on the date which is 90 calendar days prior to the first anniversary of the preceding year's annual meeting of shareholders. However, if the date of the applicable year's annual meeting is more than 30 days before or more than 60 days after the first anniversary of the date of the previous year's meeting, then a shareholder's notice to be timely must be received by the Secretary not earlier than the close of business on the date which is 120 calendar days prior to the date on which the Corporation first mailed its proxy statement to shareholders in connection with the applicable year's annual meeting and not later than the date of the later to occur of (i) 90 calendar days before the date on which the Corporation first mailed its proxy statement to shareholders in connection with the applicable year's annual meeting of shareholders or (ii) ten calendar days after the Corporation's first public announcement of the date of the applicable year's annual meeting of shareholders. In no event shall any adjournment or postponement of an annual meeting or the public announcement thereof commence a new time period for the giving of a shareholder's notice as described above.

Further, for a shareholder's notice to be proper, it must set forth:

- the name and address of the shareholder;
- the class and number of shares of stock of the Corporation held of record and beneficially owned by such shareholder;
- the name(s), including any beneficial owners, and address(es) of such shareholder(s) in which all such shares of stock are registered on the stock transfer books of the Corporation;
- a representation that the shareholder intends to appear at the meeting in person or by proxy to submit the business specified in such notice;

## Edgar Filing: FIRST FARMERS & MERCHANTS CORP - Form DEF 14A

- a brief description of the business desired to be submitted to the annual meeting of shareholders, the complete text of any resolutions intended to be presented at the annual meeting and the reasons for conducting such business at the annual meeting of shareholders;
- any personal or other material interest of the shareholder in the business to be submitted;
- as to each person whom the shareholder proposes to nominate for election or reelection as a director, all information relating to such person that is required to be disclosed in solicitations of proxies for election of directors, or is otherwise required, in each case pursuant to Regulation 14A under the Exchange Act (including such person's written consent to being named in the proxy statement as a nominee and to serving as a director if elected); and
- all other information relating to the nomination or proposed business which may be required to be disclosed under applicable law. In addition, a shareholder seeking to submit such nominations or business at the meeting shall promptly provide any other information reasonably requested by the Corporation.

Nominations by shareholders of persons for election to the Corporation's Board of Directors may also be made at a special meeting of shareholders if the shareholder's notice, in the form required by the Bylaws, shall be delivered to the Corporate Secretary at the principal office of the Corporation not earlier than the date which is 120 calendar days before the date of such special meeting and not later than the date of the later to occur of (i) 90 calendar days before the date of such special meeting of shareholders or (ii) ten calendar days after the Corporation's first public announcement of the date of the special meeting of shareholders.

Shareholders who wish to nominate a candidate for election to the Corporation's Board of Directors (other than the candidates proposed by the Corporation's Board of Directors) or propose any other business at the 2011 annual meeting of shareholders must deliver written notice to the Corporate Secretary at the address below not earlier than December 21, 2010 or later than January 20, 2011. Shareholders who satisfy the SEC requirements and wish to have a proposal considered for inclusion in the Corporation's proxy statement for the 2011 annual meeting of shareholders should submit the proposal in writing by mailing it to the Corporate Secretary at the address below no later than December 1, 2010.

Any nomination for director or other proposal by a shareholder that is not submitted in a timely manner and does not comply with these notice requirements will be disregarded, and upon the instructions of the presiding officer of the annual meeting all votes cast for each such nominee and such proposal will be disregarded. Nominations or proposals for consideration at an annual meeting of shareholders must be sent to the following address:

First Farmers and Merchants Corporation

Attention: Corporate Secretary

P.O. Box 1148

Columbia, Tennessee 38402-1148



Shareholder Comments at 2010 Annual Meeting of Shareholders



## Edgar Filing: FIRST FARMERS & MERCHANTS CORP - Form DEF 14A

A shareholder who wishes to make comments to or ask questions of the presiding officer at the Annual Meeting on April 20, 2010, must submit in writing the comments or questions no later than April 12, 2010 to: First Farmers and Merchants Corporation, Attention: Corporate Secretary, P.O. Box 1148, Columbia, TN 38402-1148. Management reserves the right to edit or exclude any such comments or questions in the interests of relevance, appropriateness and time. A written communication of any such editing or exclusion will be sent to the shareholder before the Annual Meeting.

Annual Report



Edgar Filing: FIRST FARMERS & MERCHANTS CORP - Form DEF 14A

The Corporation's annual report to shareholders for the fiscal year 2009 is enclosed but is not intended to be part of this Proxy Statement.

**COPIES OF THE CORPORATION'S ANNUAL REPORT ON FORM 10-K FILED WITH THE SEC WILL BE MAILED TO SHAREHOLDERS WITHOUT CHARGE UPON WRITTEN REQUEST MADE TO: PATRICIA P. BEARDEN, ASSISTANT TREASURER, FIRST FARMERS AND MERCHANTS CORPORATION, P. O. BOX 1148, COLUMBIA, TENNESSEE 38402-1148.**

**Important Notice Regarding the Availability of Proxy Materials for the Annual Meeting to Be Held on April 20, 2010:**



Edgar Filing: FIRST FARMERS & MERCHANTS CORP - Form DEF 14A

This Proxy Statement and the Corporation's 2009 Annual Report to Shareholders are available on the Information & Tools Annual Report page of our website at [www.fandmbank.com](http://www.fandmbank.com).

By the order of the Board of Directors,

/s/ Martha M. McKennon

Martha M. McKennon  
Corporate Secretary







**First Farmers and Merchants Bank**

**Audit Committee Charter**



## Edgar Filing: FIRST FARMERS & MERCHANTS CORP - Form DEF 14A

The Board of Directors of First Farmers and Merchants Bank (the Bank ) establishes an Audit Committee (the Committee ) with the purpose, authority, composition, meetings and responsibilities as outlined below:

### PURPOSE

To assist the Board of Directors in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities for:

1. The integrity of the Bank s financial statements.
2. The Bank s compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.
3. The independent External Auditor, Kraft CPA, PLLC, qualifications and independence.
4. The independent Internal Auditors: 1) Professional Bank Services, Inc. (PBS), 2) Crowe Horwath, LLP, and 3) Credit Risk Management, LLC (CRM) qualifications and independence.
5. The performance of the Bank s Internal Audit function.
6. The Bank s Ethics Policy, Code of Conduct, and Fraud Policy.
7. Special investigations and Whistleblower responsibilities.

### AUTHORITY

The Audit Committee has authority to conduct or authorize investigations into any matters within its scope of responsibility. It is empowered to:

- Appoint, compensate, and oversee the work of outside independent firms with whom the Bank outsources selected internal audit functions. The firms will report directly to the Audit Committee.
- Resolve any disagreements between Bank Management and the independent External or Internal Auditor regarding financial reporting.
- Pre-approve all auditing and permitted non-audit services performed by the Bank s External and Internal Audit firms.
- Retain independent counsel, accountants, or others to advise the committee or assist in the conduct of an investigation.
- Seek any information it requires from employees - - all of whom are directed to cooperate with the committee s requests - - or external parties.
- Meet with Bank Officers, External and Internal Auditors, or outside counsel, as necessary.

### COMPOSITION

The Audit Committee will consist of at least three and no more than seven members of the Board of Directors. Audit Committee members are appointed annually by a majority vote of the Board. One of the members shall be appointed Audit Committee Chairman by the Chairman of the Board. Each committee member will be both independent and financially literate. At least one member shall be designated as the financial expert, as defined by applicable legislation and regulation. No committee member shall simultaneously serve on the audit committees of more than two other public companies.

**Bank Audit Committee Members:**

Dan C. Wheeler, Chairman

W. Donald Wright

James L. Bailey

Dr. O. Rebecca Hawkins

Dr. David S. Williams

Dr. Joseph W. Remke, III

Matthew M. (Sonny) Scoggins, Financial Expert

A-1

---

## MEETINGS

The committee will meet at least four times a year, with authority to convene additional meetings, as circumstances require. All committee members are expected to attend each meeting, in person or via phone conference. The committee will invite members of management, auditors or others to attend meetings and provide pertinent information, as necessary. It may meet separately, periodically, with management, with Internal Auditors and with External Auditors. It may also meet periodically in executive session. Meeting agendas will be prepared by the Board appointed Audit Committee Secretary and provided in advance to members, along with appropriate briefing materials. Minutes will be prepared.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

The committee will carry out the following responsibilities:

### Financial Statements

- Review significant accounting and reporting issues and understand their impact on the financial statements. These issues include:
- Complex or unusual transactions and highly judgmental areas.
- Major issues regarding accounting principles and financial statement presentations, including any significant changes in the Bank's selection or application of accounting principles
- The effect of regulatory and accounting initiatives, as well as off-balance sheet structures, on the financial statements of the Bank.
- Review analysis prepared by management or the independent External Auditor setting forth significant financial reporting issues and judgments made in connection with the preparation of the financial statements, including analyses of the effects of alternative GAAP methods on the financial statements.
- Review with Management, the External and the Internal Auditors the results of the audits, including any difficulties encountered. This review will include any restrictions on the scope of the independent External and Internal auditor's activities or on access to requested information, and any significant disagreements with management.
- Discuss the annual audited financial statements and quarterly financial statements with management and the External Auditors, including the bank's disclosures under Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition & Results of Operations .

Review disclosures made by CEO and CFO during the Forms 10-K and 10-Q certification process about significant deficiencies in the design or operation of internal controls or any fraud that involves management or other employees who have a significant role in the bank's internal controls.

### External Audit

- Review the independent External Auditors' proposed audit scope and approach, including coordination of audit effort with internal audit.
- Review the performance of the independent External Auditors, and exercise final approval on the appointment or discharge of the auditors.
- Review and evaluate the lead partner of the independent External Auditor.



## Edgar Filing: FIRST FARMERS & MERCHANTS CORP - Form DEF 14A

- Present the report's conclusions with respect to the independent External Auditor to the Board.
- Ensure the rotation of the lead audit partner every five years and other audit partners every seven years, and consider whether there should be regular rotation of the audit firm itself.
- As needed, meet separately with the independent External Auditors to discuss any matters that the committee or auditors believe should be discussed privately.

A-2

---

### **Internal Audit**

- Review the independent Internal Auditors' proposed audit scope and approach, including coordination of audit effort with internal audit.
- Review with Bank Management and the Internal Controls Officer the charter, plans, activities, staffing, and organizational structure of the internal audit function.
- Ensure there are no unjustified restrictions or limitations, and review and concur in the appointment, replacement, or dismissal of the Internal Controls Officer.
- Review the effectiveness of the internal audit function.
- As needed, meet separately with the Internal Controls Officer to discuss any matters that the committee or internal audit believes should be discussed privately.

### **Internal Control**

- Consider the effectiveness of the Bank's internal control process, including information technology security and control.
- Understand the scope of the Internal and External Auditors' review of internal control processes over financial reporting, and obtain reports on significant findings and recommendations, together with management's responses.

### **Compliance**

- Review the effectiveness of the system for monitoring compliance with laws and regulations and the results of management's investigation and follow-up (including disciplinary action) of any instances of noncompliance.
- Review the effectiveness of the Whistleblower program through Compliance Partners. (Note: This program is the established procedures for monitoring complaints received by The Compliance Partners company from bank employees regarding accounting, internal accounting controls, or auditing matters, and, the confidential, anonymous reporting of concerns regarding questionable accounting or auditing matters.)
- Review the findings of any examinations by regulatory agencies, and any auditor observations.
- Obtain regular updates from management regarding compliance matters.

### **Reporting Responsibilities**

- Regularly report to the Board of Directors about committee activities and issues that arise with respect to the quality or integrity of the Bank's financial statements, the Bank's compliance with legal or regulatory requirements, the performance and independence of the Bank's independent External and Internal Auditors, and the performance of the internal audit function.
- Provide an open avenue of communication between internal audit, the independent External and Internal Auditors, and the Board of Directors.

## Edgar Filing: FIRST FARMERS & MERCHANTS CORP - Form DEF 14A

- Report annually to the shareholders, describing the committee's composition, responsibilities and how they were discharged, and any other information required by rule, including approval of non-audit services.
- Review any other reports the Bank issues that relate to committee responsibilities.

### **Other Responsibilities**

- Perform other activities related to this charter as requested by the Board of Directors.
- Institute and oversee special investigations as needed.
- Review and assess the adequacy of the committee charter annually, requesting board approval for proposed changes, and ensure appropriate disclosure as may be required by law or regulation.
- Confirm annually that all responsibilities outlined in this charter have been carried out.
- The Audit Committee will annually review its effectiveness.

**FIRST FARMERS AND MERCHANTS CORPORATION**

816 South Garden Street, P. O. Box 1148

Columbia, Tennessee 38402-1148

**PROXY**

KNOW ALL PERSONS BY THESE PRESENTS, that I, the undersigned shareholder of First Farmers and Merchants Corporation of Columbia, Tennessee (the Corporation), do nominate, constitute, and appoint Margaret York Puckett, Alvin Moore, and James G. White, II or any one of them with full power to act alone, my true and lawful representative with respect to all shares of Common Stock of the Corporation that I would be entitled to vote at the Annual Meeting of Shareholders to be held on **April 20, 2010, at 4:00 p.m.**, Central Time at the **Cherry Theater, Waymon L. Hickman Building, Columbia State Community College, Columbia, Tennessee**, or any adjournment thereof, with all the powers that I would possess if personally present, as follows:

1. **Election of the following 16 nominees as directors of the Corporation:**

Kenneth A. Abercrombie	Jonathan M. Edwards	Timothy E. Pettus	W. Lacy Upchurch
James L. Bailey, Jr.	Thomas Napier Gordon	Dr. Joseph W. Remke, III	William R. Walter
M. Darlene Baxter	Dr. O. Rebecca Hawkins	Matthew M. Scoggins, Jr.	Dan C. Wheeler
H. Terry Cook, Jr.	Dalton M. Mounger	T. Randy Stevens	Dr. David S. Williams

- FOR** all nominees listed
- AGAINST** all nominees listed
- MIXED VOTE** To Withhold Authority to vote for any individual nominee listed above, line through or strike out the nominee's name. In favor of those nominees not marked.

2. At their discretion, Margaret York Puckett, Alvin Moore, or James G. White, II are authorized to vote upon such other business as may properly come before the meeting.

Management presently knows of no other business to be presented at the meeting.

**This proxy, when properly executed, will be voted in the manner directed herein by the undersigned shareholder. If no direction is made, this proxy will be voted for the directors nominated.**

Edgar Filing: FIRST FARMERS & MERCHANTS CORP - Form DEF 14A

**This proxy is solicited on behalf of the Board of Directors. This proxy may be revoked prior to its exercise.**

When shares are held by joint tenants, both should sign. When signing as attorney, executor, administrator, trustee, or guardian, please give full title. If there is more than one trustee, all should sign. All joint owners must sign. If a corporation, please sign in full corporate name by President or other authorized officer. If a partnership, please sign in partnership name by authorized person.

Dated the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2010

(Signature of Shareholder)

No. of Shares PLEASE MARK, SIGN, DATE AND RETURN THIS PROXY PROMPTLY.

**I will attend the meeting/reception.**

**Number attending**

**I will not attend the meeting/reception.**

---