

FIRST FINANCIAL BANCORP /OH/

Form 10-K

February 25, 2013

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UNITED STATES

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Washington, D.C. 20549

FORM 10-K

(Mark One)

ANNUAL REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(D) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934

For the fiscal year ended December 31, 2012

OR

TRANSITION REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(D) OF THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1934

Commission File Number 0-12379

FIRST FINANCIAL BANCORP.

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Ohio

(State or other jurisdiction of  
incorporation or organization)

31-1042001

(I.R.S. Employer  
Identification No.)

255 East Fifth Street, Suite 700

Cincinnati, Ohio

(Address of principal executive offices)

Registrant's telephone number, including area code: (877) 322-9530

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(b) of the Act:

Common Shares, no par value

Warrants, each to purchase one Common Share, no par value

Name of exchange on which registered:

The Nasdaq Stock Market LLC

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(g) of the Act:

None

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is a well-known seasoned issuer, as defined in Rule 405 of the Securities Act.

Yes  No

Indicated by check mark if the registrant is not required to file reports pursuant to Section 13 or Section 15(d) of the Act.

Yes  No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant (1) has filed all reports required to be filed by Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to file such reports), and (2) has been subject to such filing requirements for the past 90 days.

Yes  No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant has submitted electronically and posted on its corporate Web site, if any, every Interactive Data File required to be submitted and posted pursuant to Rule 405 of Regulation S-T during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to submit and post such files).

Yes  No

Indicate by check mark if disclosure of delinquent filers pursuant to Item 405 of Regulation S-K (subpart 229.405 of this chapter) is not contained herein, and will not be contained, to the best of registrant's knowledge, in definitive proxy or information statements incorporated by reference in Part III of this Form 10-K or any amendment to this Form 10-K.

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Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, a non-accelerated filer, or a smaller reporting company. See definitions of “large accelerated filer,” “accelerated filer” and “smaller reporting company” in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act. (Check one):

Large accelerated filer

Accelerated filer

Non-accelerated filer

Smaller reporting company

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a shell company (as defined in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act).

Yes  No

The aggregate market value of the voting stock held by non-affiliates of the registrant, computed by reference to the sales price of the last trade of such stock as of June 30, 2012, was \$906,168,000. (The exclusion from such amount of the market value of the shares owned by any person shall not be deemed an admission by the registrant that such person is an affiliate of the registrant.)

As of February 22, 2013, there were issued and outstanding 57,906,537 common shares of the registrant.

Documents Incorporated by Reference:

Portions of the registrant’s Annual Report to Shareholders for the year ended December 31, 2012 are incorporated by reference into Parts I, II and IV.

Portions of the registrant’s definitive Proxy Statement for the Annual Meeting of Shareholders to be held on May 28, 2013 are incorporated by reference into Part III.

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PART I

Item 1. Business.

First Financial Bancorp.

First Financial Bancorp., an Ohio corporation (First Financial, the Company, we, us, our), was formed in 1982. First Financial is a mid-sized, regional bank holding company headquartered in Cincinnati, Ohio.

First Financial engages in the business of commercial banking and other banking and banking-related activities through its oldest wholly owned subsidiary, First Financial Bank, National Association (Bank), which was founded in 1863.

The range of banking services provided by First Financial to individuals and businesses includes commercial lending, real estate lending, and consumer financing. Real estate loans are loans secured by a mortgage lien on the real property of the borrower, which may either be residential property (one to four family residential housing units) or commercial property (owner-occupied and/or investor income producing real estate, such as apartments, shopping centers, office buildings). In addition, First Financial offers deposit products that include interest-bearing and noninterest-bearing accounts, time deposits, and cash management services for commercial customers. A full range of trust and asset management services is also provided through First Financial's Wealth Management division.

Commercial loans are made to all types of businesses for a variety of purposes including, but not limited to, inventory, receivables, and equipment. First Financial works with businesses to meet their shorter term working capital needs while also providing long-term financing for their business plans. In 2010, First Financial began to offer lease and equipment financing through a wholly-owned subsidiary of Bank, First Financial Equipment Finance LLC (First Equipment Finance), primarily in its principal markets. First Equipment Finance delivers financing solutions to small and mid-size companies in various industries with significant diversity in the types of underlying equipment. Credit risk is managed through standardized loan policies, established and authorized credit limits, centralized portfolio management and the diversification of market area and industries. The overall strength of the borrower is evaluated through the credit underwriting process and includes a variety of analytical activities including the review of historical and projected cash flows, historical financial performance, financial strength of the principals and guarantors, and collateral values, where applicable.

Commercial lending activities include equipment and leasehold improvement financing for franchisees, principally quick service and casual dining restaurants. The underwriting of these loans incorporates basic credit proficiencies combined with knowledge of select franchise concepts to measure the creditworthiness of proposed multi-unit borrowers. The focus is on a limited number of concepts that have sound economics, lower closure rates, and brand awareness within specified local, regional, or national markets. Loan terms for equipment are generally up to 84 months fully amortizing and up to 180 months on real estate related requests.

Commercial real estate loans are secured by a mortgage lien on the real property. The credit underwriting for both owner-occupied and investor income producing real estate loans includes detailed market analysis, historical and projected cash flow analysis, appropriate equity margins, assessment of lessees and lessors, type of real estate and other analysis. Risk of loss is managed by adherence to standard loan policies that establish certain levels of performance prior to the extension of a loan to the borrower. Market diversification within First Financial's service area, as well as a diversification by industry, are other means by which the risk of loss is managed by First Financial. First Financial does not have a significant exposure to residential builders and developers.

The majority of residential real estate loans originated by the Bank conform to secondary market underwriting standards and are sold within a short timeframe to unaffiliated third parties, including the future servicing rights to the loans. The credit underwriting standards adhere to a certain level of documentation, verifications, valuation, and

overall credit performance of the borrower. The underwriting of these loans includes an evaluation of these and other pertinent factors prior to the extension of credit. These underwriting standards help in the management of the credit risk elements and increase the marketability of the loans.

Consumer loans are primarily loans made to individuals. These types of loans include new and used vehicle loans, second mortgages on residential real estate, and unsecured loans. Risk elements in the consumer loan portfolio are primarily focused on the borrower's cash flow and credit history, key indicators of the ability to repay. A certain level of security is provided through liens on automobile titles and second mortgage liens, where applicable. Consumer loans are generally smaller dollar amounts than other types of lending and are made to a large number of customers. Both factors help provide diversification within the portfolio. Economic conditions that affect consumers in First Financial's markets have a direct impact on the credit quality of these loans. Higher levels of unemployment, lower levels of income growth and weaker economic growth are factors that may adversely impact consumer loan credit quality.

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Home equity lines of credit consist mainly of revolving lines of credit secured by residential real estate. Home equity lines of credit are generally governed by the same lending policies and subject to the same credit risk as described previously for residential real estate loans.

First Financial has minimal foreign currency transactions and in general, does not have a significant exposure to foreign currencies. Foreign currency activities are generally related to services provided to commercial customers. Information regarding statistical disclosure required by the Securities and Exchange Commission's Industry Guide 3 is included in First Financial's Annual Report to Shareholders for the year ended December 31, 2012, and is incorporated herein by reference.

First Financial's executive office is located at 255 East Fifth Street, Suite 700, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202, and the telephone number is (877) 322-9530. First Financial makes available, free of charge, its annual reports on Form 10-K, quarterly reports on Form 10-Q, current reports on Form 8-K, and all amendments to those reports, as soon as reasonably practicable after filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), through its website, [www.bankatfirst.com](http://www.bankatfirst.com) under the "Investor Information" link, under "SEC Filings." Copies of such reports also can be found on the SEC's website at [www.sec.gov](http://www.sec.gov).

### Employees

At December 31, 2012, First Financial and its subsidiaries had 1,547 full-time and part-time employees.

### Subsidiaries

The list of each of First Financial's subsidiaries can be found at Exhibit 21 of this Form 10-K.

### Business Combinations

On September 23, 2011, First Financial Bank completed the purchase of 16 retail banking centers located in and around Dayton, Ohio from Liberty Savings Bank, FSB (Liberty) including \$126.5 million of performing loans and \$341.9 million of deposits at their estimated fair values. First Financial also acquired \$3.8 million of fixed assets at estimated fair value and paid Liberty a \$22.4 million net deposit premium. First Financial recorded \$17.1 million of goodwill related to the Liberty banking center acquisition.

On December 2, 2011, First Financial Bank completed the purchase of 22 Indiana-based retail banking centers located in and around Indianapolis, Indiana from Flagstar Bank, FSB (Flagstar) and assumed approximately \$464.7 million of deposits at their estimated fair value. First Financial also acquired \$6.6 million of fixed assets at estimated fair value and paid Flagstar a \$22.5 million net deposit premium. First Financial recorded \$26.1 million of goodwill related to the Flagstar banking center acquisition.

The Liberty and Flagstar banking center acquisitions were accounted for in accordance with FASB ASC Topic 805, Business Combinations. Assets acquired in these transactions are not subject to loss sharing agreements.

During the third quarter of 2009, through Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC)-assisted transactions, First Financial acquired the banking operations of Peoples Community Bank (Peoples), Irwin Union Bank and Trust Company (Irwin Union Bank) and Irwin Union Bank, F.S.B. (Irwin FSB) (Irwin Union Bank and Irwin FSB, collectively, Irwin). The Company also acquired 3 Indiana banking centers including related deposits and loans, from Irwin in a separate and unrelated transaction prior to the FDIC-assisted transactions. The acquisitions of the Peoples and Irwin franchises significantly expanded the First Financial footprint, opened new markets and strengthened the Company through the generation of additional capital.

In connection with the Peoples and Irwin FDIC-assisted transactions, First Financial entered into loss sharing agreements with the FDIC. Under the terms of these agreements the FDIC will reimburse First Financial for losses with respect to certain loans (covered loans) and other real estate owned (covered OREO) (collectively, covered assets), beginning with the first dollar of loss. Covered loans represent approximately 19% of First Financial's loans at December 31, 2012. These agreements provide for loss protection on single-family, residential loans for a period of ten years and First Financial is required to share any recoveries of previously charged-off amounts for the same time period, on the same pro-rata basis with the FDIC. All other loans are provided loss protection for a period of five years and recoveries of previously charged-off loans must be shared with the FDIC for a period of eight years, again on the same pro-rata basis.

First Financial must follow specific servicing and resolution procedures, as outlined in the loss sharing agreements, in order to receive reimbursement from the FDIC for losses on covered assets. The Company has established separate and dedicated teams of legal, finance, credit and technology staff to execute and monitor all activity related to each agreement, including the required periodic reporting to the FDIC. First Financial intends to service all covered assets with the same resolution practices and diligence as it does for the assets that are not subject to a loss share agreement.

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An overview of the transactions are discussed in further detail in the Business Combinations section of the Management's Discussion and Analysis.

### Market and Competitive Information

First Financial, through the regionalization efforts and business model of its subsidiary bank, delivers a community banking philosophy to its clients. First Financial currently serves a combination of metropolitan and non-metropolitan markets primarily in Indiana, Ohio, and Kentucky through its full-service banking centers. Market selection is based upon a number of factors, but markets are primarily chosen for their potential for growth, long-term profitability, and customer reach. First Financial's goal is to develop a competitive advantage through a local market focus; building long-term relationships with clients and helping them reach greater levels of financial success.

We also compete on a nationwide basis with respect to our franchise finance subsidiary (First Franchise Capital).

The Company's markets support many different types of business activities, such as manufacturing, agriculture, education, healthcare, and professional services. Within these markets, growth is projected to continue in key demographic groups and populations. First Financial's market evaluation includes demographic measures such as income levels, median household income, and population growth within key segments. The Midwest markets that First Financial serves have historically not experienced the level of economic highs and lows seen in other sections of the country. Its markets are generally marked by less volatility in business activity, although material fluctuations may occur. In recent years, the overall national economy was negatively impacted by the deterioration of the sub-prime lending market, which quickly developed into a credit and liquidity crisis in other sectors of the financial services industry. This resulted in the implementation of a number of government sponsored programs designed to invest capital and liquidity into the financial services sector for the purposes of strengthening consumer confidence and stimulating lending activity. However, First Financial's strong liquidity and capital position combined with conservative lending practices has allowed the Company, to this point, to significantly mitigate macro-economic risk.

First Financial believes that it is well positioned to compete in these markets. Smaller than super-regional and multi-national bank holding companies, First Financial believes that it can meet the needs of its markets through a decision-making network of local management. First Financial believes that it is better positioned to compete for business than other smaller banks that may have size or geographic limitations. First Financial's targeted customers include individuals and small to medium sized businesses within the geographic region of its subsidiary bank's banking center network. Through the delivery systems of banking centers, ATMs, internet banking, and telephone-based transactions, First Financial meets the needs of its customers in an ever-changing marketplace.

First Financial faces strong competition from financial institutions and other non-financial organizations. Its competitors include local and regional financial institutions, savings and loans, and bank holding companies, as well as some of the largest banking organizations in the United States. In addition, other types of financial institutions, such as credit unions, offer a wide range of loan and deposit services that are competitive with those offered by First Financial. The consumer is also served by brokerage firms and mutual funds that provide checking services, credit cards, and other services similar to those offered by First Financial. Major stores compete for loans by offering credit cards and retail installment contracts. It is anticipated that competition from other financial and non-financial services entities will continue and for certain products and services, intensify.

### Supervision and Regulation

We, our subsidiary bank, and its subsidiaries, are subject to an extensive system of laws and regulations that are intended primarily for the protection of customers and depositors and not for the protection of security holders. These laws and regulations govern such areas as capital, permissible activities, allowance for loan losses, loans and



investments, and rates of interest that can be charged on loans. Described below are elements of selected laws and regulations. The descriptions are not intended to be complete and are qualified in their entirety by reference to the full text of the statutes and regulations described.

#### Depository Institution Regulation

First Financial Bank, as a national banking association, is subject to supervision and regular examination by the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC). All depository institutions and their deposits are insured up to the legal limits by the Deposit Insurance Fund (DIF) which is administered by the FDIC and is subject to the provisions of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act (FDIA).

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### Insurance of Accounts

The FDIC currently maintains the DIF, which was created in 2006 in the merger of the Bank Insurance Fund and the Savings Association Insurance Fund. The deposit accounts of our subsidiary bank are insured by the DIF to the maximum amount provided by law. The general insurance limit is \$250,000. This insurance is backed by the full faith and credit of the United States Government.

As insurer, the FDIC is authorized to conduct examinations of and to require reporting by DIF-insured institutions. It also may prohibit any DIF-insured institution from engaging in any activity the FDIC determines by regulation or order to pose a serious threat to the DIF. The FDIC also has the authority to take enforcement actions against insured institutions.

The FDIC assesses deposit insurance premiums on each insured institution quarterly based on annualized rates for one of four risk categories. Each institution is assigned to one of four risk categories based on its capital, supervisory ratings and other factors. Well capitalized institutions that are financially sound with only a few minor weaknesses are assigned to Risk Category I. Risk Categories II, III and IV present progressively greater risks to the DIF. A range of initial base assessment rates applies to each Risk Category, subject to adjustments based on an institution's unsecured debt, secured liabilities and brokered deposits, such that the total base assessment rates after adjustments range from 7 to 24 basis points for Risk Category I, 17 to 43 basis points for Risk Category II, 27 to 58 basis points for Risk Category III, and 40 to 77.5 basis points for Risk Category IV.

As required by the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (Dodd-Frank Act), the FDIC has adopted rules effective April 1, 2011, under which insurance premium assessments are based on an institution's quarterly average total assets minus its quarterly average tangible equity (defined as Tier 1 capital) instead of its deposits. Under these rules, an institution with total assets of less than \$10 billion will be assigned to a Risk Category as described above, and a range of initial base assessment rates will apply to each category, subject to adjustment downward based on unsecured debt issued by the institution and, except for an institution in Risk Category I, adjustment upward if the institution's brokered deposits exceed 10% of its domestic deposits, to produce total base assessment rates. Total base assessment rates range from 2.5 to 9 basis points for Risk Category I, 9 to 24 basis points for Risk Category II, 18 to 33 basis points for Risk Category III, and 30 to 45 basis points for Risk Category IV, all subject to further adjustment upward if the institution holds more than a de minimis amount of unsecured debt issued by another FDIC-insured institution. The FDIC may increase or decrease its rates by 2.0 basis points without further rulemaking. In an emergency, the FDIC may also impose a special assessment.

In addition, all institutions with deposits insured by the FDIC are required to pay assessments to fund interest payments on bonds issued by the Financing Corporation, a mixed-ownership government corporation established to recapitalize a predecessor to the Deposit Insurance Fund. These assessments will continue until the Financing Corporation bonds mature in 2019.

Insurance of deposits may be terminated by the FDIC upon a finding that the institution has engaged or is engaging in unsafe and unsound practices, is in an unsafe or unsound condition to continue operations or has violated any applicable law, regulation, rule, order or condition imposed by the FDIC or written agreement entered into with the FDIC. The management of the Bank does not know of any practice, condition or violation that might lead to termination of deposit insurance.

On November 12, 2009, the FDIC adopted regulations that required insured depository institutions to prepay on December 30, 2009, their estimated quarterly risk-based assessments for the fourth quarter of 2009 and all of 2010, 2011 and 2012, along with their quarterly risk-based assessment for the fourth quarter of 2009. The FDIC collected First Financial Bank's prepaid assessments amounting to \$17.0 million on December 30, 2009. First Financial Bank had no remaining prepaid FDIC assessments at December 31, 2012.

Pursuant to the Dodd-Frank Act, the FDIC has established 2.0% as the designated reserve ratio (DRR), that is, the ratio of the DIF to insured deposits. The FDIC has adopted a plan under which it will meet the statutory minimum DRR of 1.35% by September 30, 2020, the deadline imposed by the Dodd-Frank Act. The Dodd-Frank Act requires the FDIC to offset the effect on institutions with assets less than \$10 billion of the increase in the statutory minimum DRR to 1.35% from the former statutory minimum of 1.15%. The FDIC has not yet announced how it will implement this offset or how larger institutions will be affected by it.

#### Community Reinvestment Act

Under the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA), every FDIC-insured institution is obligated, consistent with safe and sound banking practices, to help meet the credit needs of its entire community, including low and moderate income neighborhoods. The CRA requires the appropriate federal banking regulator, in connection with the examination of an insured institution, to assess the institution's record of meeting the credit needs of its community and to consider this record in its evaluation of

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certain applications, such as a merger or the establishment of a branch. An unsatisfactory rating may be used as the basis for the denial of an application and will prevent a bank holding company of the institution from making an election to become a financial holding company. As of its last examination, First Financial Bank received a Community Reinvestment Act rating of “satisfactory.”

### Privacy Rules

Federal banking regulators, as required under the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, have adopted rules limiting the ability of banks and other financial institutions to disclose nonpublic information about consumers to non-affiliated third parties. The rules require disclosure of privacy policies to consumers and, in some circumstances, allow consumers to prevent disclosure of certain personal information to non-affiliated third parties. The privacy provisions of the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act affect how consumer information is transmitted through diversified financial services companies and conveyed to outside vendors.

### Bank Holding Company

As a bank holding company, First Financial is subject to the provisions of the Bank Holding Company Act of 1956, as amended (the BHCA) and is subject to supervision and examination by the Federal Reserve Board. The BHCA requires prior approval by the Federal Reserve Board of the acquisition of 5% or more of the voting stock or substantially all the assets of any bank within the United States. In addition, subject to regulatory approval, First Financial can acquire thrift institutions. Acquisitions are subject to certain anti-competitive limitations.

The BHCA and the regulations of the Federal Reserve Board prohibit a bank holding company and its subsidiaries from engaging in certain tie-in arrangements in connection with any extension of credit, lease or sale of property, or furnishing of services. The BHCA also imposes certain restrictions upon dealings by affiliated banks with the holding company and among themselves, including restrictions on inter-bank borrowing and upon dealings in the securities or obligations of the holding company or other affiliates.

In addition, bank holding companies that satisfy certain requirements may elect to become financial holding companies. Financial holding companies are permitted to engage in certain activities that are “financial in nature” (e.g. insurance underwriting, securities brokerage, merchant banking) and that are not permitted for bank holding companies. First Financial’s current strategic plans do not include utilizing these expanded activities and as a result it has not elected to become a financial holding company.

The earnings of banks, and, therefore, the earnings of First Financial (and its subsidiaries), are affected by the policies of regulatory authorities, including the Federal Reserve Board. An important function of the Federal Reserve Board is to regulate the national supply of bank credit in an effort to prevent recession and to restrain inflation. Among the procedures used to implement these objectives are open market operations in U.S. Government securities, changes in the discount rate on member bank borrowings, and changes in reserve requirements on member bank deposits.

These procedures are used in varying combinations to influence overall growth and distribution of bank loans, investments and deposits, and their use also may affect interest rates charged on loans or paid for deposits.

Monetary policies of the Federal Reserve Board have had a significant effect on the operating results of commercial banks in the past and are expected to continue to do so in the future.

### Recent Legislation, Other Regulatory Developments and Pending Legislation

#### Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008

The U.S. Department of the Treasury (Treasury), working with the Federal Reserve Board, established late in 2008 the TARP Capital Purchase Program (CPP), which was intended to stabilize the financial services industry. The CPP was

established as part of the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 enacted on October 3, 2008. One of the components of the CPP included a \$250 billion voluntary capital purchase program for certain qualified and healthy banking institutions. Pursuant to the CPP, Treasury purchased from First Financial 80,000 shares of \$1,000 par value senior perpetual preferred securities at a price of \$80.0 million equal to approximately 3.0% of the Company's then risk-weighted assets. Such preferred shares paid a dividend of 5% for the first five years and was to increase to 9% thereafter. In addition, subject to certain limited exceptions, as a participant in the CPP, the Company was prohibited from (a) increasing its dividend to common shareholders and (b) conducting share repurchases without prior approval of the Treasury. First Financial also was subject to certain limitations on executive compensation as well as other conditions.

During February 2010, First Financial successfully completed a follow-on common equity offering and, after deducting underwriting and other offering costs, received net proceeds of \$91.2 million. On February 24, 2010, First Financial used most

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of the net proceeds to redeem all of the \$80.0 million in senior preferred shares issued to the Treasury in December 2008 under the CPP. Subsequent to the equity offering and redemption of the preferred shares, the Company experienced an increase in its already strong regulatory and GAAP capitalization levels.

In connection with the Company's participation in the CPP, Treasury also received a warrant for the purchase of common stock in the amount of 930,233 shares at a strike price of \$12.90 per share that expires on December 23, 2018. As a result of the common equity raised during the second quarter of 2009, the number of common shares eligible for purchase under the warrant agreement was reduced by 50% to 465,117 shares. In June 2010, the Treasury conducted an auction of the warrants in which the warrants were sold in a public offering pursuant to a registration statement filed by First Financial at a price of \$6.70 per warrant. This transaction represented the final step in the redemption process and the Treasury no longer owns any securities issued by First Financial.

The Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act

On July 21, 2010, President Obama signed into law the sweeping financial regulatory reform act entitled the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act that implements far-reaching changes to the regulation of the financial services industry, including provisions that, among other things will:

- centralize responsibility for consumer financial protection by creating a new agency responsible for implementing, examining and enforcing compliance with federal consumer financial laws with broad rulemaking, supervision and enforcement authority for a wide range of consumer protection laws that would apply to all banks and thrifts; smaller financial institutions, including First Financial Bank, will be subject to the supervision and enforcement of their primary federal banking regulator with respect to the federal consumer financial protection laws;
- apply the same leverage and risk-based capital requirements that apply to insured depository institutions to bank holding companies;
- require the FDIC to seek to make its capital requirements for banks countercyclical so that the amount of capital required to be maintained increases in times of economic expansion and decreases in times of economic contraction;
- change the assessment base for federal deposit insurance from the amount of insured deposits to consolidated assets less tangible capital;
- implement corporate governance revisions, including with regard to executive compensation and proxy access by stockholders, that apply to all public companies, not just financial institutions;
- make permanent the \$250,000 limit for federal deposit insurance and increase the cash limit of Securities Investor Protection Corporation protection from \$100,000 to \$250,000, and provide unlimited federal deposit insurance until January 1, 2013, for non-interest bearing demand transaction accounts at all insured depository institutions;
- repeal the federal prohibitions on the payment of interest on demand deposits, thereby permitting depository institutions to pay interest on business transaction and other accounts starting July 2011; and
- increase the authority of the Federal Reserve to examine First Financial Bancorp and its non-bank subsidiaries.

The Dodd-Frank Act includes certain provisions concerning the capital regulations of the United States banking regulators, which are often referred to as the "Collins Amendment." These provisions are intended to subject bank holding companies to the same capital requirements as their bank subsidiaries and to eliminate or significantly reduce the use of hybrid capital instruments, especially trust preferred securities, as regulatory capital. Under the Collins Amendment, trust preferred securities issued by a company, such as our company, with total consolidated assets of less than \$15 billion before May 19, 2010 and treated as regulatory capital are grandfathered, but any such securities issued later are not eligible as regulatory capital. The banking regulators must develop regulations setting minimum risk-based and leverage capital requirements for holding companies and banks on a consolidated basis that are no less stringent than the generally applicable requirements in effect for depository institutions under the prompt corrective action regulations discussed below. The banking regulators also must seek to make capital standards countercyclical so that the required levels of capital increase in times of economic expansion and decrease in times of economic contraction. The Dodd-Frank Act requires these new capital regulations to be adopted by the Federal Reserve in final

form 18 months after the date of enactment of the Dodd-Frank Act (July 21, 2010). To date, no proposed regulations have been issued.

Many aspects of the act are subject to rulemaking and will take effect over several years, making it difficult to anticipate the overall financial impact on First Financial, its customers or the financial industry more generally. Provisions in the legislation that affect deposit insurance assessments and payment of interest on demand deposits could increase the costs associated with deposits as well as place limitations on certain revenues those deposits may generate.

#### Other Regulatory Developments

The Basel Committee on Banking Supervision's "Basel II" regulatory capital guidelines originally published in June 2004 and adopted in final form by U.S. regulatory agencies in November 2007 are designed to promote improved risk measurement and

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management processes and better align minimum capital requirements with risk. The Basel II guidelines became operational in April 2008, but are mandatory only for “core banks,” i.e., banks with consolidated total assets of \$250 billion or more. They are thus not applicable to First Financial, which continues to operate under U.S. risk-based capital guidelines consistent with “Basel I” guidelines published in 1988.

Federal regulators issued for public comment in December 2006 proposed rules (designated as “Basel IA” rules) applicable to non-core banks that would have modified the existing U.S. Basel I-based capital framework. In July 2008, however, these regulators issued, instead of the Basel IA proposals, new rulemaking involving a “standardized framework” that would implement some of the simpler approaches for both credit risk and operational risk from the more advanced Basel II framework. Non-core U.S. depository institutions would be allowed to opt in to the standardized framework or elect to remain under the existing Basel I-based regulatory capital framework.

On December 17, 2009, the Basel Committee issued a set of proposals (2009 Capital Proposals) that would significantly revise the definitions of Tier 1 capital and Tier 2 capital. Among other things, the 2009 Capital Proposals would re-emphasize that common equity is the predominant component of Tier 1 capital. Concurrently with the release of the 2009 Capital Proposals, the Basel Committee also released a set of proposals related to liquidity risk exposure (2009 Liquidity Proposals). The 2009 Liquidity Proposals include the implementation of (i) a liquidity coverage ratio (LCR), designed to ensure that a bank maintains an adequate level of unencumbered, high-quality assets sufficient to meet the bank’s liquidity needs over a 30-day time horizon under an acute liquidity stress scenario and (ii) a net stable funding ratio (NSFR), designed to promote more medium and long-term funding of the assets and activities of banks over a one-year time horizon.

In December 2010 and January 2011, the Basel Committee published the final texts of reforms on capital and liquidity generally referred to as “Basel III.” Although Basel III is intended to be implemented by participating countries for large, internationally active banks, its provisions are likely to be considered by United States banking regulators in developing new regulations applicable to other banks in the United States, including First Financial Bank.

For banks in the United States, among the most significant provisions of Basel III concerning capital are the following:

- a minimum ratio of common equity to risk-weighted assets reaching 4.5%, plus an additional 2.5% as a capital conservation buffer, by 2019 after a phase-in period;
  - a minimum ratio of Tier 1 capital to risk-weighted assets reaching 6.0% by 2019 after a phase-in period;
  - a minimum ratio of total capital to risk-weighted assets, plus the additional 2.5% capital conservation buffer, reaching 10.5% by 2019 after a phase -in period;
  - an additional countercyclical capital buffer to be imposed by applicable national banking regulators periodically at their discretion, with advance notice;
  - restrictions on capital distributions and discretionary bonuses applicable when capital ratios fall within the buffer zone;
  - deduction from common equity of deferred tax assets that depend on future profitability to be realized;
  - increased capital requirements for counterparty credit risk relating to over the counter derivatives, repos and securities financing activities; and
- for capital instruments issued on or after January 13, 2013 (other than common equity), a loss-absorbency requirement such that the instrument must be written off or converted to common equity if a trigger event occurs, either pursuant to applicable law or at the direction of the banking regulator. A trigger event is an event under which the banking entity would become nonviable without the write-off or conversion, or without an injection of capital from the public sector. The issuer must maintain authorization to issue the requisite shares of common equity if conversion were required.



The Basel III provisions on liquidity include complex criteria establishing the LCR and NSFR. The purpose of the LCR is to ensure that a bank maintains adequate unencumbered, high quality liquid assets to meet its liquidity needs for 30 days under a severe liquidity stress scenario. The purpose of the NSFR is to promote more medium and long-term funding of assets and activities, using a one-year horizon. Although Basel III is described as a “final text,” it is subject to the resolution of certain issues and to further guidance and modification, as well as to adoption by United States banking regulators, including decisions as to whether and to what extent it will apply to United States banks that are not large, internationally active banks.

First Financial continues to monitor all developments related to Basel III.

#### Internet Website

We maintain a website with the address [www.bankatfirst.com](http://www.bankatfirst.com). The information contained on our website is not included as a part of, or incorporated by reference into, this Annual Report on Form 10-K. Other than an investor's own Internet access

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charges, we make available free of charge through our website our Annual Reports on Form 10-K, Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q and Current Reports on Form 8-K, and amendments to these reports, as soon as reasonably practicable after we have electronically filed such material with, or furnished such material to, the Securities and Exchange Commission.

### Item 1A. Risk Factors.

#### Possible Additional Risks

The risks listed here are not the only risks we face. Additional risks that are not presently known, or that we presently deem to be immaterial, also could have a material adverse effect on our financial condition, results of operations, business, and prospects. (See also “Item 7. Management’s Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations” for certain forward looking statements.)

#### Recent Market, Legislative, and Regulatory Events

Difficult market conditions have adversely affected our industry.

Dramatic declines in the housing market over the past years, with falling home prices and increasing foreclosures, unemployment and under-employment, have negatively impacted the credit performance of real estate related loans and resulted in significant write-downs of asset values by financial institutions. These write-downs, initially of mortgage-backed securities (MBS) but spreading to other securities and loans have caused many financial institutions to seek additional capital, to reduce or eliminate dividends, to merge with larger and stronger institutions and, in some cases, to fail. Reflecting concern about the stability of the financial markets generally and the strength of counterparties, many lenders and institutional investors have reduced or ceased providing funding to borrowers, including to other financial institutions. This market turmoil and tightening of credit have led to an increased level of commercial and consumer delinquencies, lack of consumer confidence, increased market volatility and widespread reduction of business activity generally. The resulting economic pressure on consumers and lack of confidence in the financial markets has adversely affected our business, financial condition and results of operations. Market developments may affect consumer confidence levels and may cause adverse changes in payment patterns, causing increases in delinquencies and default rates, which may impact our charge-offs and provision for credit and fraud losses. A worsening of these conditions would likely exacerbate the adverse effects of these difficult market conditions on us and others in the financial institutions industry.

Current levels of market volatility are unprecedented.

The capital and credit markets have been experiencing volatility and disruption. Recently, volatility and disruption have reached unprecedented levels. In some cases, the markets have produced downward pressure on stock prices and credit availability for certain issuers without regard to those issuers’ underlying financial strength. If current levels of market disruption and volatility continue or worsen, there can be no assurance that we will not experience an adverse effect, which may be material, on our ability to access capital and on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Numerous facts and circumstances are considered when evaluating the carrying value of our goodwill. One of those considerations is our market capitalization, evaluated over a reasonable period of time, in relation to the aggregate estimated fair value of the reporting units. While this comparison provides some relative market information regarding the estimated fair value of the reporting units, it is not determinative and needs to be evaluated in the context of the current economic and political environment. However, significant and/or sustained declines in First Financial’s market capitalization, especially in relation to First Financial’s book value, could be an indication of potential impairment of goodwill.

The downgrade of the U.S. credit rating and Europe’s debt crisis could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and liquidity.

Standard & Poor’s lowered its long term sovereign credit rating on the United States of America from AAA to AA+ on August 5, 2011. A further downgrade or a downgrade by other rating agencies could have a material adverse impact on financial markets and economic conditions in the United States and worldwide. Any such adverse impact could

have a material adverse effect on our liquidity, financial condition and results of operations. Many of our investment securities are issued by and some of our loans are made to U.S. government agencies and U.S. government sponsored entities.

In addition, the possibility that certain European Union (EU) member states will default on their debt obligations have negatively impacted economic conditions and global markets. The continued uncertainty over the outcome of international and the EU's financial support programs and the possibility that other EU member states may experience similar financial troubles could further disrupt global markets. The negative impact on economic conditions and global markets could also have a material adverse effect on our liquidity, financial condition and results of operations.

The soundness of other financial institutions could adversely affect us.

Our ability to engage in routine funding transactions could be adversely affected by the actions and commercial soundness of other financial institutions. Financial services institutions are interrelated as a result of trading, clearing, counterparty, or other relationships. As a result, defaults by, or even rumors or questions about, one or more financial services institutions, or the

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financial services industry generally, have led to market-wide liquidity problems and could lead to losses or defaults by us or by other institutions. Many of these transactions could expose us to credit risk in the event of default of our counterparty or client. In addition, our credit risk may be exacerbated when the collateral held by us cannot be realized upon or is liquidated at prices not sufficient to recover the full amount of the financial instrument exposure due us. There is no assurance that any such losses would not materially and adversely affect our results of operations.

There can be no assurance that enacted legislation or any proposed federal programs will stabilize the U.S. financial system and such legislation and programs may adversely affect us.

There has been much legislative and regulatory action in response to the financial crises affecting the banking system and financial markets and threats to investment banks and other financial institutions. There can be no assurance, however, as to the actual impact that the legislation and its implementing regulations or any other governmental program will have on the financial markets. The failure of the actions by the legislators, the regulatory bodies or the U.S. government to stabilize the financial markets and a continuation or worsening of current financial market conditions could materially and adversely affect our business, financial condition, results of operations, and access to credit or the trading price of our common shares.

Contemplated and proposed legislation, state and federal programs, and increased government control or influence may adversely affect us by increasing the uncertainty in our lending operations and expose us to increased losses, including legislation that would allow bankruptcy courts to permit modifications to mortgage loans on a debtor's primary residence, moratoriums on a mortgagor's right to foreclose on property, and requirements that fees be paid to register other real estate owned property. Statutes and regulations may be altered that may potentially increase our costs to service and underwrite mortgage loans. Additionally, federal intervention and operation of formerly private institutions may adversely affect our rights under contracts with such institutions and the way in which we conduct business in certain markets.

Recently enacted and potential further financial regulatory reforms could have a significant impact on our business, financial condition and results of operations.

On July 21, 2010, President Obama signed the Dodd-Frank Act into law. The Dodd-Frank Act is expected to have a broad impact on the financial services industry, including significant regulatory and compliance changes. Many of the requirements called for in the Dodd-Frank Act will be implemented over time and most will be subject to implementing regulations over the course of several years. Given the uncertainty associated with the manner in which the provisions of the Dodd-Frank Act will be implemented by the various regulatory agencies and through regulations, the full extent of the impact such requirements will have on our operations is unclear. The changes resulting from the Dodd-Frank Act may impact the profitability of business activities, require changes to certain business practices, impose more stringent capital, liquidity and leverage requirements or otherwise adversely affect our business. In particular, the potential impact of the Dodd-Frank Act on our operations and activities, both currently and prospectively, include, among others:

- a reduction in the ability to generate or originate revenue-producing assets as a result of compliance with heightened capital standards;
- increased cost of operations due to greater regulatory oversight, supervision and examination of banks and bank holding companies, and higher deposit insurance premiums;
- the limitation on the ability to raise new capital through the use of trust preferred securities, as any new issuances of these securities will no longer be included as Tier 1 capital going forward;
- a potential reduction in fee income due to limits on interchange fees applicable to larger institutions which could effectively reduce the fees we can charge; and
- the limitation on the ability to expand consumer product and service offerings due to anticipated stricter consumer protection laws and regulations.

Further, we may be required to invest significant management attention and resources to evaluate and make any changes necessary to comply with new statutory and regulatory requirements under the Dodd-Frank Act, which may negatively impact results of operations and financial condition.

Additionally, we cannot predict whether there will be additional proposed laws or reforms that would affect the U.S. financial system or financial institutions, whether or when such changes may be adopted, how such changes may be interpreted and enforced or how such changes may affect us. However, the costs of complying with any additional laws or regulations could have a material adverse effect on our financial condition and results of operations.

The fiscal and monetary policies of the federal government and its agencies could have a material adverse effect on our earnings.

The Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System regulates the supply of money and credit in the United States. Its policies determine in large part the cost of funds for lending and investing and the return earned on those loans and

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investments, both of which affect the net interest margin. The resultant changes in interest rates can also materially decrease the value of certain financial assets we hold, such as debt securities. Its policies can also adversely affect borrowers, potentially increasing the risk that they may fail to repay their loans. Changes in Federal Reserve Board policies are beyond our control and difficult to predict; consequently, the impact of these changes on our activities and results of operations is difficult to predict.

### Risks Relating to Our Business

#### Credit Risks

When we loan money, commit to loan money or enter into a letter of credit or other contract with a counterparty, we incur credit risk, or the risk of losses if our borrowers do not repay their loans or our counterparties fail to perform according to the terms of their contracts.

Large, individual loans, letters of credit and contracts magnify such credit risks. As lending is one of our primary business activities, the credit quality of our portfolio can have a significant impact on our earnings. We estimate and establish reserves for credit risks and credit losses inherent in our total loan portfolio. This process, which is critical to our financial results and condition, requires difficult, subjective and complex judgments, including forecasts of economic conditions and how these economic predictions might impair the ability of our borrowers to repay their loans. As is the case with any such assessments, there is always the chance that we will fail to identify the proper factors or that we will fail to accurately estimate the impacts of factors that we identify. In addition, large loans, letters of credit and contracts with individual counterparties in our portfolio magnify the credit risk that we face, as the impact of large borrowers and counterparties not repaying their loans or performing according to the terms of their contracts has a disproportionately significant impact on our credit losses and reserves.

Weakness in the economy and in the real estate market, including specific weakness within our geographic footprint, has adversely affected us and may continue to adversely affect us.

If the strength of the U.S. economy in general and the strength of the local economies in which we conduct operations decline, or continue to decline, this could result in, among other things, a deterioration of credit quality or a reduced demand for credit, including a resultant effect on our loan portfolio and allowance for loan and lease losses. These factors could result in higher delinquencies and greater charge-offs in future periods, which would materially and adversely affect our financial condition and results of operations.

Weakness in the real estate market, including the secondary residential mortgage loan markets, could adversely affect us.

Significant ongoing disruptions in the secondary market for residential mortgage loans have limited the market for and liquidity of many mortgage loans. The effects of ongoing mortgage market challenges, combined with the ongoing correction in residential real estate market prices and reduced levels of home sales, could result in further price reductions in single family home values, adversely affecting the value of collateral securing mortgage loans that we hold, mortgage loan originations and profits on sales of mortgage loans. These trends could continue and such conditions could result in higher losses, write downs and impairment charges in our mortgage and other lines of business. Continued declines in real estate values, home sale volumes, financial stress on borrowers as a result of job losses, interest rate resets on adjustable rate mortgage loans or other factors could have further adverse effects on borrowers that could result in higher delinquencies and greater charge-offs in future periods, which adversely affect our financial condition or results of operations. Additionally, decreases in real estate values might adversely affect the creditworthiness of state and local governments, and this might result in decreased profitability or credit losses from loans made to such governments. A decline in home values or overall economic weakness could also have an adverse impact upon the value of real estate or other assets which we own upon foreclosing a loan and our ability to realize value on such assets.

Real estate volatility and future changes in our disposition strategies could result in net proceeds that differ significantly from our OREO fair value appraisals.

Our OREO portfolio consists of properties that we obtained through foreclosure or through an in-substance foreclosure in satisfaction of loans. Properties in our OREO portfolio are recorded at the lower of the recorded investment in the loans for which the properties previously served as collateral or the “fair value”, which represents the estimated sales price of the properties on the date acquired less estimated selling costs. Generally, in determining “fair value” an orderly disposition of the property is assumed, except where a different disposition strategy is expected. Significant judgment is required in estimating the fair value of OREO, and the period of time within which such estimates can be considered current is significantly shortened during periods of market volatility, as is currently being experienced.

In response to market conditions and other economic factors, we may utilize alternative sale strategies other than orderly disposition as part of our OREO disposition strategy, such as immediate liquidation sales. In this event, as a result of the significant judgments required in estimating fair value and the variables involved in different methods of disposition, the net

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proceeds realized from such sales transactions could differ significantly from appraisals, comparable sales, and other estimates used to determine the fair value of our OREO properties.

The information that we use in managing our credit risk may be inaccurate or incomplete, which may result in an increased risk of default and otherwise have an adverse effect on our business, results of operations and financial condition.

In deciding whether to extend credit or enter into other transactions with clients and counterparties, we may rely on information furnished by or on behalf of clients and counterparties, including financial statements and other financial information. We also may rely on representations of clients and counterparties as to the accuracy and completeness of that information and, with respect to financial statements, on reports of independent auditors. Although we regularly review our credit exposure to specific clients and counterparties and to specific industries that we believe may present credit concerns, default risk may arise from events or circumstances that are difficult to detect, such as fraud. Moreover, such circumstances, including fraud, may become more likely to occur and/or be detected in periods of general economic uncertainty, such as at the present time. We may also fail to receive full information with respect to the risks of a counterparty. In addition, in cases where we have extended credit against collateral, we may find that we are under secured, for example, as a result of sudden declines in market values that reduce the value of collateral or due to fraud with respect to such collateral. If such events or circumstances were to occur, it could result in a potential loss of revenue and have an adverse effect on our business, results of operations and financial condition.

Recently declining values of real estate, increases in unemployment, and the related effects on local economies may increase our credit losses, which would negatively affect our financial results.

We offer a variety of secured loans, including commercial lines of credit, commercial term loans, real estate, construction, home equity, consumer and other loans. Many of our loans are secured by real estate (both residential and commercial) in our market area. A major change in the real estate market, such as deterioration in the value of this collateral, or in the local or national economy, could adversely affect our customer's ability to pay these loans, which in turn could adversely impact us. Additionally, increases in unemployment also may adversely affect the ability of certain clients to pay loans and the financial results of commercial clients in localities with higher unemployment, which may result in loan defaults and foreclosures and which may impair the value of our collateral. Risk of loan defaults and foreclosures are unavoidable in the banking industry, and we try to limit our exposure to this risk by monitoring our extensions of credit carefully. We cannot fully eliminate credit risk, and as a result credit losses may increase in the future.

Deteriorating credit quality, particularly in real estate loans, has adversely impacted us and may continue to adversely impact us.

Late in 2008 we began to experience a downturn in the overall credit performance of our loan portfolio, as well as acceleration in the deterioration of general economic conditions. This deterioration, including a significant increase in national and regional unemployment levels and decreased sources of liquidity are the primary drivers of the increased stress being placed on most borrowers and is negatively impacting their ability to repay. These conditions have contributed to the elevated level of our loan loss reserves in recent years.

The overall economy, while showing signs of improvement in 2012, remains fragile and has yet to demonstrate a clear ability to sustain this improvement. As a result, the Company expects that certain of its credit metrics may remain volatile in future periods, or until there are more sustained signs of economic recovery, including lower unemployment rates and stabilized property values. Continued deterioration in the quality of our credit portfolio could significantly increase nonperforming loans, require additional increases in loan loss reserves, elevate charge-off levels and have a material adverse effect on our capital, financial condition, and results of operations. Furthermore, given the size of our loan portfolio, it is possible that deterioration in the credit quality of one or two of our largest credits could have a material adverse effect on our capital, financial condition, and results of operations.



The results of the internal stress test may not accurately predict the impact on our company if the condition of the economy were to continue to deteriorate.

During the past few years, we conducted a number of internal stress tests. These stress tests were based on the tests that were administered to the nation's 19 largest banks in 2009 by the Treasury in connection with its Supervisory Capital Assessment Program. Under the stress tests, we applied the Treasury's assumptions to estimate our credit losses, resources available to absorb those losses and any necessary additions to capital that would be required under the "more adverse" stress test scenario.

While we believe we have appropriately applied the Treasury's assumptions in performing our internal stress tests, we cannot assure you that the results of this test are comparable to the results of stress tests performed and publicly released by the Treasury or that the results of our stress test would be the same if it had been performed by the Treasury. Moreover, the results of the stress tests may not accurately reflect the impact on our company if the economy does not improve or continues to

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deteriorate. Any continued deterioration of the economy could result in credit losses significantly higher, with a corresponding impact on our resources and capital requirements, than those predicted by our internal stress tests.

Our allowance for loan losses may prove to be insufficient to absorb losses in our loan portfolio.

Like all financial institutions, we maintain an allowance for loan losses to provide for loans in our portfolio that may not be repaid in their entirety. We believe that our allowance for loan losses is maintained at a level adequate to absorb probable losses inherent in our loan portfolio as of the corresponding balance sheet date. However, our allowance for loan losses may not be sufficient to cover actual loan losses, and future provisions for loan losses could materially and adversely affect our operating results. We have seen a significant increase in the level of potential problem loans and other loans with higher than normal risk. We expect to receive more frequent requests from borrowers to modify loans. The related accounting measurements related to impairment and the loan loss allowance require significant estimates which are subject to uncertainty and changes relating to new information and changing circumstances. Our estimates of the risk of loss and amount of loss on any loan are complicated by the significant uncertainties surrounding our borrowers' abilities to successfully execute their business models through changing economic environments, competitive challenges and other factors. Because of the degree of uncertainty and susceptibility of these factors to change, our actual losses may vary from our current estimates.

State and federal regulators, as an integral part of their examination process, periodically review our allowance for loan losses and may require us to increase our allowance for loan losses by recognizing additional provisions for loan losses charged to expense, or to decrease our allowance for loan losses by recognizing loan charge-offs, net of recoveries. Any such additional provisions for loan losses or charge-offs, as required by these regulatory agencies, could have a material adverse effect on our financial condition and results of operations.

We expect fluctuations in our loan loss provisions due to the uncertain economic conditions.

### Operating Risks

The introduction, implementation, withdrawal, success and timing of business initiatives and strategies, including, but not limited to, the opening of new banking centers or entering into new product lines, may be less successful or may be different than anticipated, which could adversely affect our business.

First Financial makes certain projections and develops plans and strategies for its banking and financial products. If we do not accurately determine demand for our banking and financial products, it could result in us incurring significant expenses without the anticipated increases in revenue, which could result in a material adverse effect on its business.

Changes in market interest rates or capital markets could adversely affect our revenue and expense, the value of assets and obligations, and the availability and cost of capital or liquidity.

Given our business mix, and the fact that most of the assets and liabilities are financial in nature, we tend to be sensitive to market interest rate movements and the performance of the financial markets. In addition to the impact of the general economy, changes in interest rates or in valuations in the debt or equity markets could directly impact us in one or more of the following ways:

- the yield on earning assets and rates paid on interest bearing liabilities may change in disproportionate ways;
- the value of certain balance sheet and off-balance sheet financial instruments or the value of equity investments that we hold could decline;
- the value of assets for which we provide processing services could decline; or
- to the extent we access capital markets to raise funds to support our business; such changes could affect the cost of such funds or the ability to raise such funds.

Although we have implemented procedures we believe will reduce the potential effects of changes in interest rates on our results of operations, these procedures may not always be successful. In addition, any substantial or prolonged

change in market interest rates could adversely affect our financial condition, results of operation and liquidity.

We may be required to repurchase mortgage loans or indemnify mortgage loan purchasers as a result of breaches of representations and warranties, borrower fraud, or certain borrower defaults, which could harm our liquidity, results of operations, and financial condition.

When we sell mortgage loans, whether as whole loans or pursuant to a securitization, we are required to make customary representations and warranties to the purchaser about the mortgage loans and the manner in which they were originated. Our whole loan sale agreements require us to repurchase or substitute mortgage loans in the event we breach any of these representations or warranties. In addition, we may be required to repurchase mortgage loans as a result of borrower fraud. Likewise, we are required to repurchase or substitute mortgage loans if we breach a representation or warranty in connection with our securitizations. While we have taken steps to enhance our underwriting policies and procedures, there can be no

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assurance that these steps will be effective or reduce risk associated with loans sold in the past. If the level of repurchase and indemnity activity becomes material, our liquidity, results of operations and financial condition will be adversely affected.

Clients could pursue alternatives to bank deposits, causing us to lose a relatively inexpensive source of funding. Checking and savings account balances and other forms of client deposits could decrease if clients perceive alternative investments as providing superior expected returns. When clients move money out of bank deposits in favor of alternative investments, we can lose a relatively inexpensive source of funds, increasing our funding costs.

Consumers may decide not to use banks to complete their financial transactions, which could affect net income. Technology and other changes now allow parties to complete financial transactions without banks. For example, consumers can pay bills and transfer funds directly without banks. This process could result in the loss of fee income, as well as the loss of client deposits and the income generated from those deposits.

Our asset management business subjects us to a variety of risks.

At December 31, 2012, we had \$2.3 billion in assets under management. A sharp decline in the stock market can negatively impact the amount of assets under management and thus subject our earnings to a broader variety of risks and uncertainties.

Negative public opinion could damage our reputation and adversely impact business and revenues.

As a financial institution, our earnings and capital are subject to risks associated with negative public opinion.

Negative public opinion could result from our actual or alleged conduct in any number of activities, including lending practices, the failure of any product or service sold by us to meet our clients' expectations or applicable regulatory requirements, corporate governance and acquisitions, or from actions taken by government regulators and community organizations in response to those activities. Negative public opinion can adversely affect our ability to keep and attract and/or retain clients and can expose us to litigation and regulatory action. Actual or alleged conduct by one of our businesses can result in negative public opinion about our other businesses. Negative public opinion could also affect our ability to borrow funds in the unsecured wholesale debt markets.

We rely on other companies to provide key components of our business infrastructure.

Third parties provide key components of our business infrastructure such as banking services, processing, and Internet connections and network access. Any disruption in such services provided by these third parties or any failure of these third parties to handle current or higher volumes of use could adversely affect our ability to deliver products and services to clients and otherwise to conduct business. Technological or financial difficulties of a third party service provider could adversely affect our business to the extent those difficulties result in the interruption or discontinuation of services provided by that party. These vendors provide services that support our operations, including the storage and processing of sensitive consumer and business customer data, as well as our sales efforts. A cyber security breach of a vendor's system may result in theft of our data or disruption of business processes. A material breach of customer data security at a service provider's site may negatively impact our business reputation and cause a loss of customers; result in increased expense to contain the event and/or require that we provide credit monitoring services for affected customers, result in regulatory fines and sanctions and may result in litigation. In most cases, we will remain primarily liable to our customers for losses arising from a breach of a vendor's data security system. We rely on our outsourced service providers to implement and maintain prudent cyber security controls. Furthermore, we may not be insured against all types of losses as a result of third party failures and our insurance coverage may be inadequate to cover all losses resulting from system failures or other disruptions. Failures in our business infrastructure could interrupt the operations or increase the costs of doing business.

We rely on our systems, employees, and certain counterparties, and certain failures could materially adversely affect our operations.

We are exposed to many types of operational risk, including the risk of fraud by employees and outsiders, clerical and record-keeping errors, and computer/telecommunications systems malfunctions. Our businesses are dependent on our ability to process a large number of increasingly complex transactions. If any of our financial, accounting, or other data processing systems fail or have other significant shortcomings, we could be materially adversely affected. A cyber security breach may result in theft of such data or disruption of our transaction processing systems. We depend on internal systems and outsourced technology to support these data storage and processing operations. Our inability to use or access these information systems at critical points in time could unfavorably impact the timeliness and efficiency of our business operations. A material breach of customer data security may negatively impact our business reputation and cause a loss of customers, result in increased expense to contain the event and/or require that we provide credit monitoring services for affected customers, result in regulatory fines and sanctions and may result in class action litigation. Cyber security risk management programs are expensive to maintain and will not protect us from all risks associated with maintaining the security of customer data and our proprietary data from external and internal intrusions, disaster recovery and failures in the controls used by our vendors. In addition, Congress and the legislatures of states in which we operate regularly consider legislation that would impose more stringent data privacy requirements. We are similarly dependent on our employees. We could be materially adversely affected if one of our

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employees causes a significant operational break-down or failure, either as a result of human error or where an individual purposefully sabotages or fraudulently manipulates our operations or systems. Third parties with which we do business could also be sources of operational risk to us, including relating to break-downs or failures of such parties' own systems or employees. Any of these occurrences could result in our diminished ability to operate one or more of our businesses, potential liability to clients, reputational damage and regulatory intervention, which could materially adversely affect us. We may also be subject to disruptions of our operating systems arising from events that are wholly or partially beyond our control, which may include, for example, computer viruses or electrical or telecommunications outages or natural disasters, or events arising from local or regional politics, including terrorist acts. Such disruptions may give rise to losses in service to clients and loss or liability to us. In addition there is the risk that our controls and procedures as well as business continuity and data security systems prove to be inadequate. Any such failure could affect our operations and could materially adversely affect our results of operations by requiring us to expend significant resources to correct the defect, as well as by exposing us to litigation or losses not covered by insurance.

We depend on the accuracy and completeness of information about clients and counterparties.

In deciding whether to extend credit or enter into other transactions with clients and counterparties, we may rely on information furnished by or on behalf of clients and counterparties, including financial statements and other financial information. We also may rely on representations of clients and counterparties as to the accuracy and completeness of that information and, with respect to financial statements, on reports of independent auditors.

**We May Be Subject to General Claims and Litigation Liability.**

In the ordinary course of business, we may be named as defendant or may otherwise face claims or legal action, including class actions, from a variety of sources including, among others, customers; vendors; regulatory agencies; federal, state or local governments; or employees. Such claims or legal action may include, among others, breach of contract, breach of fiduciary duty, discrimination, harassment, fraud and infringement of patents, copyrights or trademarks. Such claims or legal action may also make demands for substantial monetary damages and require substantial amounts of time and resources to defend. Should we be named as defendant or otherwise face such claims or legal actions, there can be no assurance that we would be successful in its defense against such actions, which could have a material adverse impact on our financial position, results of operations and liquidity. Additional information related to litigation is included in Note 7 to the consolidated financial standards and in Item 3, Part I of this Annual Report on Form 10-K.

### **Industry Risks**

Regulation by federal and state agencies could adversely affect the business, revenue, and profit margins.

We are heavily regulated by federal and state agencies. This regulation is to protect depositors, the federal deposit insurance fund and the banking system as a whole. Congress and state legislatures and federal and state regulatory agencies continually review banking laws, regulations, and policies for possible changes. Changes to statutes, regulations, or regulatory policies, including interpretation or implementation of statutes, regulations, or policies, could affect us adversely, including limiting the types of financial services and products we may offer and/or increasing the ability of non-banks to offer competing financial services and products. Also, if we do not comply with laws, regulations, or policies, we could receive regulatory sanctions and damage to our reputation.

Competition in the financial services industry is intense and could result in losing business or reducing margins.

We operate in a highly competitive industry that could become even more competitive as a result of legislative, regulatory and technological changes, and continued consolidation. We face aggressive competition from other domestic and foreign lending institutions and from numerous other providers of financial services. The ability of non-banking financial institutions to provide services previously limited to commercial banks has intensified competition. Because non-banking financial institutions are not subject to the same regulatory restrictions as banks and bank holding companies, they can often operate with greater flexibility and lower cost structures. Securities firms

and insurance companies that elect to become financial holding companies may acquire banks and other financial institutions. This may significantly change the competitive environment in which we conduct business. Some of our competitors have greater financial resources and/or face fewer regulatory constraints. As a result of these various sources of competition, we could lose business to competitors or be forced to price products and services on less advantageous terms to retain or attract clients, either of which would adversely affect our profitability.

Future legislation could harm our competitive position.

Federal, state, and local legislatures increasingly have been considering proposals to substantially change the financial institution regulatory system and to expand or contract the powers of banking institutions and bank holding companies. Various legislative bodies have also recently been considering altering the existing framework governing creditors' rights, including legislation that would result in or allow loan modifications of various sorts. Such legislation may change banking statutes and the operating environment in substantial and unpredictable ways. If enacted, such legislation could increase or decrease the cost of doing business, limit or expand permissible activities, or affect the competitive balance among banks,

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savings associations, credit unions, and other financial institutions. We cannot predict whether new legislation will be enacted and, if enacted, the effect that it, or any regulations, would have on our activities, financial condition, or results of operations.

Maintaining or increasing market share depends on market acceptance and regulatory approval of new products and services.

Our success depends, in part, on the ability to adapt products and services to evolving industry standards. There is increasing pressure to provide products and services at lower prices. This can reduce net interest income and noninterest income from fee-based products and services. In addition, the widespread adoption of new technologies could require us to make substantial capital expenditures to modify or adapt existing products and services or develop new products and services. We may not be successful in introducing new products and services in response to industry trends or development in technology or those new products may not achieve market acceptance. As a result, we could lose business, be forced to price products and services on less advantageous terms to retain or attract clients, or be subject to cost increases.

### Company Risks

We may not pay dividends on your common shares.

Holder of our common shares are only entitled to receive such dividends as our Board of Directors may declare out of funds legally available for such payments. Although we have historically declared cash dividends on our common shares, we are not required to do so and may reduce or eliminate our common shares dividend in the future. This could adversely affect the market price of our common shares.

There may be future sales or other dilution of our equity, which may adversely affect the market price of our common shares.

Generally, we are not restricted from issuing additional common shares, including any securities that are convertible into or exchangeable for, or that represent the right to receive, common shares. We are currently authorized to issue up to 160 million common shares, of which 58,046,235 shares are outstanding at December 31, 2012. Our board of directors has authority, without action or vote of the shareholders, to issue all or part of the authorized but unissued shares. These authorized but unissued shares could be issued on terms or in circumstances that could dilute the interests of other shareholders.

The issuance of additional common shares as a result of the exercise of our outstanding warrants or the issuance of securities convertible or exercisable into common shares would dilute the ownership interest of our existing common shareholders. The market price of our common shares could decline as a result of an equity offering as well as other sales of a large block of common shares or similar securities in the market after this offering, or the perception that such sales could occur.

We are also authorized to issue 80,000 preferred shares of which none are outstanding as of December 31, 2012.

Our liquidity is dependent upon our ability to receive dividends from our subsidiaries, which accounts for most of our revenue and could affect our ability to pay dividends, and we may be unable to enhance liquidity from other sources. We are a separate and distinct legal entity from our subsidiaries, notably First Financial Bank. We receive substantially all of our revenue from dividends from our subsidiaries. These dividends are the principal source of funds to pay dividends on our common stock and interest and principal on our debt. Various federal and/or state laws and regulations limit the amount of dividends that our bank and certain of our non-bank subsidiaries may pay us. Additionally, if our subsidiaries' earnings are not sufficient to make dividend payments to us while maintaining adequate capital levels, we may not be able to make dividend payments to our common shareholders.



To enhance liquidity, we may from time to time borrow under credit facilities or other indebtedness. As a result of recent turbulence in the capital and credit markets, many lenders and institutional investors have reduced or ceased to provide funding to borrowers and, as a result, we may not be able to further increase liquidity through additional borrowings.

Limitations on our ability to receive dividends from our subsidiaries or an inability to increase liquidity through additional borrowings, or inability to maintain, renew or replace existing credit facilities, could have a material adverse effect on our liquidity and on our ability to pay dividends on our common shares and interest and principal on our debt.

Significant legal actions could subject us to substantial uninsured liabilities.

We are from time to time subject to claims related to our operations. These claims and legal actions, including supervisory actions by our regulators, could involve large monetary claims and significant defense costs. Substantial legal liability or significant regulatory action against us could have material adverse financial effects or cause significant reputational harm to us, which in turn could seriously harm our business prospects. We may be exposed to substantial uninsured liabilities, which could adversely affect our results of operations and financial condition.

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If our regulators deem it appropriate, they can take regulatory actions that could impact our ability to compete for new business, constrain our ability to fund our liquidity needs, and increase the cost of our services.

First Financial and its subsidiaries are subject to the supervision and regulation of various State and Federal regulators, including the OCC, the Federal Reserve, the FDIC, SEC, the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA), and various state regulatory agencies. As such, First Financial is subject to a wide variety of laws and regulations. As part of their supervisory process, which includes periodic examinations and continuous monitoring, the regulators have the authority to impose restrictions or conditions on our activities and the manner in which we manage the organization. These actions could impact the organization in a variety of ways, including subjecting us to monetary fines, restricting our ability to pay dividends, precluding mergers or acquisitions, limiting our ability to offer certain products or services, or imposing additional capital, operating, or oversight requirements.

Disruptions in our ability to access capital markets may negatively affect our capital resources and liquidity. In managing our consolidated balance sheet, we depend on wholesale capital markets to provide us with sufficient capital resources and liquidity to meet our commitments and business needs, and to accommodate the transaction and cash management needs of our clients. Other sources of funding available to us, and upon which we rely as regular components of our liquidity risk management strategy, include inter-bank borrowings, repurchase agreements, and borrowings from the Federal Home Loan Bank system. Any occurrence that may limit our access to these sources, such as a decline in the confidence of debt purchasers, or our depositors or counterparties participating in the capital markets, may adversely affect our capital costs and our ability to raise capital and, in turn, our liquidity.

Management's ability to retain key officers and employees may change.

Our future operating results depend substantially upon the continued service of its executive officers and key personnel. Our future operating results also depend in significant part upon its ability to attract and retain qualified management, lending, financial, technical, marketing, sales, and support personnel. Competition for qualified personnel is intense, and we cannot ensure success in attracting or retaining qualified personnel. There may be only a limited number of persons with the requisite skills to serve in these positions, and it may be increasingly difficult for us to hire personnel over time.

Our ability to retain key officers and employees may be further impacted by legislation and regulation affecting the financial services industry. For example, recent legislation and bank regulatory action has or will place additional restrictions on executive compensation at, and the pay practices of, financial institutions. Such restrictions and standards may further impact management's ability to compete for talent with other industries that are not subject to the same limitations as financial institutions.

Our business, financial condition, or results of operations could be materially adversely affected by the loss of any of its key employees, or our inability to attract and retain skilled employees.

Potential acquisitions may disrupt our business and dilute shareholder value and we may not be able to successfully consummate or integrate such acquisitions.

Acquiring other banks, businesses, or branches involves various risks commonly associated with acquisitions, including, among other things:

- potential exposure to unknown or contingent liabilities of the target company;
- exposure to potential asset quality issues of the target company;
- difficulty and expense of integrating the operations and personnel of the target company;
- difficulty or added costs in the wind-down of non-strategic operations;
- potential disruption to our business;
- potential diversion of our management's time and attention;

- the possible loss of key employees and customers of the target company;
- difficulty in estimating the value (including goodwill) of the target company;
- difficulty in receiving appropriate regulatory approval for any proposed transaction;
- difficulty in estimating the fair value of acquired assets, liabilities and derivatives of the target company; and
- potential changes in accounting, banking, or tax laws or regulations that may affect the target company.

We regularly evaluate merger and acquisition opportunities and conduct due diligence activities related to possible transactions with other financial institutions and financial services companies. As a result, merger or acquisition discussions and, in some cases, negotiations may take place and future mergers or acquisitions involving cash, debt or equity securities may occur at any time. Acquisitions could involve the payment of a premium over book and market values, and, therefore, some dilution of our tangible book value and net income per common share may occur in connection with any future transaction.

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Any merger or acquisition opportunity that we decide to pursue will ultimately be subject to regulatory approval and other closing conditions. We may expend substantial time and resources pursuing potential acquisitions which may not be consummated because regulatory approval is not received or other closing conditions are not satisfied. In addition, our existing credit facility and the terms of other indebtedness that we may subsequently incur may restrict our ability to consummate certain acquisitions. Furthermore, any difficulty integrating businesses acquired as a result of a merger or acquisition and the failure to realize the expected revenue increases, cost savings, increases in geographic or product presence, and/or other projected benefits from an acquisition could have an adverse impact on our liquidity, results of operations, and financial condition and any such integration could divert management's time and attention from managing our company in an effective manner and could be significantly more expensive than we anticipate.

Our accounting policies and processes are critical to how we report our financial condition and results of operations. They require management to make estimates about matters that are uncertain.

Accounting policies and processes are fundamental to how we record and report the financial condition and results of operations. Management must exercise judgment in selecting and applying many of these accounting policies and processes so they comply with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles in the United States.

Management has identified certain accounting policies as being critical because they require management's judgment to ascertain the valuations of assets, liabilities, commitments, and contingencies. A variety of factors could affect the ultimate value that is obtained either when earning income, recognizing an expense, recovering an asset, valuing an asset or liability, or reducing a liability. We have established detailed policies and control procedures that are intended to ensure these critical accounting estimates and judgments are well controlled and applied consistently. In addition, the policies and procedures are intended to ensure that the process for changing methodologies occurs in an appropriate manner. Because of the uncertainty surrounding our judgments and the estimates pertaining to these matters, we cannot guarantee that we will not be required to adjust accounting policies or restate prior period financial statements.

See the "Critical Accounting Policies" in the MD&A and Note 1, "Accounting Policies," to the Consolidated Financial Statements, in our annual report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2012 for more information.

Changes in our accounting policies or in accounting standards could materially affect how we report our financial results and condition.

From time to time, the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) and SEC change the financial accounting and reporting standards that govern the preparation of our financial statements. These changes can be hard to predict and can materially impact how we record and report our financial condition and results of operations. In some cases, we could be required to apply a new or revised standard retroactively, resulting in us restating prior period financial statements.

Our results of operations depend upon the results of operations of our subsidiaries.

We are a holding company that conducts substantially all of our operations through our bank and other subsidiaries. As a result, our ability to make dividend payments on our common shares will depend primarily upon the receipt of dividends and other distributions from our subsidiaries. There are various regulatory restrictions on the ability of our bank subsidiary to pay dividends or make other payments to us. As of the close of business on December 31, 2012, our bank subsidiary had an additional \$29.1 million available to pay dividends to us without prior regulatory approval.

Our disclosure controls and procedures may not prevent or detect all errors or acts of fraud.

Our disclosure controls and procedures are designed to reasonably assure that information required to be disclosed by us in reports we file or submit under the Securities and Exchange Act of 1934 (Exchange Act) is accurately accumulated and communicated to management, and recorded, processed, summarized, and reported within the time

periods specified in the SEC's rules and forms. We believe that any disclosure controls and procedures or internal controls and procedures, no matter how well conceived and operated, can provide only reasonable, not absolute, assurance that the objectives of the control system are met.

These inherent limitations include the realities that judgments in decision-making can be faulty, that alternative reasoned judgments can be drawn, or that breakdowns can occur because of a simple error or mistake. Additionally, controls can be circumvented by the individual acts of some persons, by collusion of two or more people or by an unauthorized override of the controls. Accordingly, because of the inherent limitations in our control system, misstatements due to error or fraud may occur and not be detected.

Our financial instruments carried at fair value expose us to certain market risks.

We maintain an available for sale investment securities portfolio which includes assets with various types of instruments and maturities. At times, we also maintain certain assets that are classified and accounted for as trading assets. The changes in fair

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value of the available for sale securities are recognized in shareholders equity as a component of other comprehensive income. The changes in fair value of financial instruments classified as trading assets are carried at fair value and recognized in earnings. The financial instruments carried at fair value are exposed to market risks related to changes in interest rates and market liquidity. We manage the market risks associated with these instruments through broad asset/liability management strategies. Changes in the market values of these financial instruments could have a material adverse impact on our financial condition or results of operations. We may classify additional financial assets or financial liabilities at fair value in the future.

Our revenues derived from our investment securities may be volatile and subject to a variety of risks. We generally maintain investment securities and trading positions in the fixed income markets. Unrealized gains and losses associated with our investment portfolio and mark to market gains and losses associated with our trading portfolio are affected by many factors, including our credit position, interest rate volatility, volatility in capital markets, and other economic factors. Our return on such investments could experience volatility and such volatility may materially adversely affect our financial condition and results of operations. Additionally, accounting regulations may require us to record a charge prior to the actual realization of a loss when market valuations of such securities are impaired and such impairment is considered to be other than temporary.

We are subject to ongoing tax examinations in various jurisdictions. The Internal Revenue Service and other taxing jurisdictions may propose various adjustments to our previously filed tax returns. It is possible that the ultimate resolution of such proposed adjustments, if unfavorable, may be material to the results of operations in the period it occurs.

In the ordinary course of business, we operate in various taxing jurisdictions and are subject to income and non-income taxes. The effective tax rate is based in part on our interpretation of the relevant current tax laws. We believe the aggregate liabilities related to taxes are appropriately reflected in the consolidated financial statements. We review the appropriate tax treatment of all transactions taking into consideration statutory, judicial, and regulatory guidance in the context of our tax positions. In addition, we rely on various tax opinions, recent tax audits, and historical experience.

From time to time, we engage in business transactions that may have an effect on our tax liabilities. Where appropriate, we have obtained opinions of outside experts and have assessed the relative merits and risks of the appropriate tax treatment of business transactions taking into account statutory, judicial, and regulatory guidance in the context of the tax position. However, changes to our estimates of accrued taxes can occur due to changes in tax rates, implementation of new business strategies, resolution of issues with taxing authorities regarding previously taken tax positions prior to acquisition and newly enacted statutory, judicial, and regulatory guidance. Such changes could affect the amount of our accrued taxes and could be material to our financial position and/or results of operations. In addition, the tax treatment of FDIC-assisted acquisitions is complex and subject to interpretations that may result in future adjustments of deferred taxes as of the acquisition dates.

In the event the Internal Revenue Service, State of Ohio, or other state tax officials propose adjustments to our previously filed tax returns (or those of our subsidiaries), it is possible that the ultimate resolution of the proposed adjustments, if unfavorable, may be material to the results of operations in the period it occurs.

### Risks Related to the Acquisition of the Business and Assets of Peoples, Irwin Union Bank and Irwin FSB.

Changes in national and local economic conditions could lead to higher loan charge-offs in connection with the acquisitions all of which may not be supported by the loss sharing agreements with the FDIC.

In connection with the acquisitions, we acquired a significant portfolio of loans. Although we marked down the loan portfolios we have acquired, there is no assurance that the non-impaired loans we acquired will not become impaired or that the impaired loans will not suffer further deterioration in value resulting in additional charge-offs to this loan

portfolio. The fluctuations in national, regional and local economic conditions, including those related to local residential, commercial real estate and construction markets, which may increase the level of charge-offs that we make to our loan portfolio, and, consequently, reduce our net income, may also increase the level of charge-offs on the loan portfolios that we have acquired in the acquisitions and correspondingly reduce our net income. These fluctuations are not predictable, cannot be controlled and may have a material adverse impact on our operations and financial condition even if other favorable events occur. See “Business Risks – Credit Risks“ in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2012 for more information on the factors affecting the levels of these charge-offs.

Although we have entered into loss sharing agreements with the FDIC, which provide that a significant portion of losses related to specified loan portfolios that we have acquired in connection with the acquisitions will be indemnified by the FDIC, we are not protected from all losses resulting from charge-offs with respect to those specified loan portfolios. Additionally, the loss sharing agreements have limited terms; therefore, any charge-off of related losses that we experience after the term of the loss sharing agreements will not be reimbursed by the FDIC and will negatively impact our net income.

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We may fail to realize any benefits and incur unanticipated losses related to the assets of Peoples, Irwin Union Bank and Irwin FSB that First Financial Bank acquired and the liabilities of Peoples, Irwin Union Bank and Irwin FSB that were assumed.

The success of these acquisitions will depend, in part, on First Financial's ability to successfully combine the acquired businesses and assets with First Financial's business and First Financial's ability to successfully manage the significant loan portfolio that was acquired. As with any acquisition involving a financial institution, particularly with respect to the acquisition nearly doubling the size of First Financial, the large increase in the number of bank branches, and new areas of lending, there may be business and service changes and disruptions that result in the loss of customers or cause customers to close their accounts and move their business to competing financial institutions. It is possible that the integration process could result in the loss of key employees, the disruption of ongoing business, or inconsistencies in standards, controls, procedures and policies that adversely affect First Financial's ability to maintain relationships with clients, customers, depositors and employees or to achieve the anticipated benefits of the acquisition. Successful integration may also be hampered by differences between the organizations. Although First Financial had significant operations in the principal regional markets in which the acquired entities operated, the loss of key employees of these entities could adversely affect First Financial's ability to successfully conduct business in certain local markets in which the entities operated, which could have an adverse effect on First Financial's financial results. Integration efforts will also divert attention and resources from First Financial's management. Additionally, general market and economic conditions or governmental actions affecting the financial industry generally may inhibit our ability to successfully integrate the institutions or wind-down/exit non-strategic businesses. If First Financial experiences difficulties with, or delays in, the integration or wind-down processes, the anticipated benefits of the acquisitions may not be realized fully, or at all, or may take longer to realize than expected. Furthermore, any cost savings that are realized may be offset by losses in revenues or other charges to earnings.

Finally, First Financial will need to ensure that the banking operations of the acquired entities maintain effective disclosure controls as well as internal controls and procedures for financial reporting, and such compliance efforts may be costly and may divert the attention of management.

First Financial's Exchange Act reports contain limited financial information on which to evaluate the acquisition of Irwin Union Bank and Irwin FSB.

The acquisition of the banking operations and certain assets of Irwin Union Bank and Irwin FSB are significant acquisitions for First Financial; however, First Financial's Exchange Act reports contain limited financial information on which to evaluate these acquisitions. First Financial's Exchange Act reports may not contain all of the financial and other information about Irwin Union Bank and Irwin FSB and the assets that were acquired and liabilities assumed that investors may consider important, including information related to the loan portfolio acquired and the impact of the acquisition on First Financial.

First Financial will be expanding operations into new geographic areas.

Portions of the market areas represented by Irwin Union Bank and Irwin FSB, including those in Arizona, California, Nevada and Utah, are areas in which First Financial historically conducted no banking activities. Although First Financial has divested and continues to divest itself of banking centers in areas outside its strategic footprint, First Financial must effectively integrate these new markets to manage the business currently conducted by these former branches, while maintaining appropriate risk controls. The ability to effectively manage assets and liabilities in these markets will be dependent on First Financial's ability to understand the local market and competitive dynamics and identify and retain certain employees from Irwin who know their markets better than First Financial does.

Furthermore, the operations of the acquired franchise lending business will increase the concentration risk of First Financial's lending and expand our geographic footprint in this area and First Financial will rely on the expertise of those individuals currently at the acquired franchise group.



Irwin Union Bank and certain of its subsidiaries, notably IHE and IMC were and continue to be the subject of a number of claims and legal actions regarding their mortgage banking, mortgage and/or home equity lines of business activities that took place prior to September 18, 2009. These matters may require significant resources and management attention.

In connection with the acquisition of certain assets and assumption of certain liabilities of Irwin Union Bank by First Financial Bank from the FDIC as receiver for Irwin Union Bank, First Financial purchased all of the stock of most of the subsidiaries of Irwin Union Bank. The transaction is governed by a Purchase and Assumption Agreement by and among the FDIC, the FDIC as receiver, and First Financial Bank dated September 18, 2009, as amended (the Purchase Agreement). There are currently claims and litigation against Irwin Union Bank and certain former Irwin Union Bank subsidiaries for alleged actions taken by Irwin Union Bank and/or its subsidiaries prior to September 18, 2009.

Pursuant to the Purchase Agreement, litigation involving Irwin Union Bank's conduct prior to First Financial Bank's acquisition of its assets principally is the responsibility of the FDIC as receiver, and the FDIC as receiver has agreed to indemnify and hold harmless First Financial Bank for certain claims against Irwin Union Bank and its former subsidiaries for actions taken on or prior to September 18, 2009.

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We have identified a number of claims (and are evaluating others) against which we believe we should be indemnified pursuant to Section 12 of the Purchase Agreement, and we have submitted and expect to continue to submit requests for indemnification to the FDIC as receiver. The process of seeking indemnification from the FDIC as receiver with respect to such litigation could be time-consuming and subject to dispute. Unless the FDIC as receiver assumes the defense of such claims, First Financial will have to expend considerable time and effort to defend the actions, subject to such indemnification. Further, until the FDIC as receiver has approved and reimbursed us for the claims for which we should be indemnified, we could be exposed to liabilities arising from the defense of such claims. Discussions are ongoing with the FDIC as receiver regarding indemnification with respect to certain actions taken by Irwin Union Bank and/or its subsidiaries prior to September 18, 2009. However, there can be no assurances that the FDIC as receiver will agree with our positions regarding indemnification.

Although we expect the FDIC as receiver to provide indemnification in connection with certain assets and liabilities pursuant to the Purchase Agreement, First Financial may discover aspects of the acquisition for which indemnification is not available. These might involve inconsistencies in standards, controls, procedures and policies of the acquired Irwin entities that could adversely affect First Financial's ability to achieve the anticipated benefits of the transaction and could distract management from implementing its strategic plan.

The Chapter 11 proceedings initiated by IMC involve various risks and uncertainties that could have a material effect on us.

In connection with the Purchase Agreement, First Financial acquired, among other things, all of the stock of IMC. Prior to the acquisition, the operations of subsidiary IMC had been in wind-down: (a) in September 2006 a majority of its assets were sold, including the production and most of the headquarters operations; and (b) in January 2007 the bulk of IMC's portfolio of mortgage servicing rights as well as its servicing platform were sold to various purchasers. IMC continues to wind down, including its prior activities in the mortgage reinsurance business through its subsidiary, Irwin Reinsurance Corporation, a Vermont Corporation.

On July 8, 2011, IMC filed a voluntary bankruptcy petition under Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code (see "Item 3. Legal Proceedings - Irwin Mortgage Corporation Bankruptcy"). The outcome of the Chapter 11 proceedings will depend on IMC's ability to reach acceptable agreement with creditors on the wind-down of IMC that is approved by the Bankruptcy Court, or alternatively if such wind-down would be confirmed by the Bankruptcy Court over the objection of any creditors or other parties in interest. We believe IMC also will be precluded from paying dividends to First Financial Bank and from making payments to any pre-petition creditors (including intercompany payables due and owing to First Financial or its subsidiaries) during the pendency of the Chapter 11 proceedings, without the Bankruptcy Court's approval. Furthermore, it is possible that in the Chapter 11 proceedings various claims may be asserted against First Financial, including allegations that we are liable for the pending litigation described in the immediately preceding risk factor, or other liabilities of IMC. We note, however, that to date, no such claims have been asserted or threatened against us, and we believe that First Financial and its subsidiaries have no responsibility for any liabilities of IMC. Accordingly, we cannot give any assurances as to the impact of the Chapter 11 proceedings on the financial condition, results of operations or future prospects of First Financial and its subsidiaries' businesses. We are also unable to predict the timing of any of the foregoing matters or the Chapter 11 proceedings themselves.

The acquisitions have increased First Financial's commercial real estate loan portfolio, which have a greater credit risk than traditional residential mortgage loans.

With the acquisition of the Irwin entities' loan portfolios, the commercial real estate and construction loan portfolios have become a larger portion of First Financial Bank's total loan portfolio than they were prior to the acquisitions. This type of lending is generally considered to have more complex credit risks than traditional single-family residential lending, because the principal is concentrated in a limited number of loans with repayment dependent on the successful operation of the related real estate or construction project. Consequently, these loans are more sensitive to the current adverse conditions in the real estate market and the general economy. These loans are generally less

predictable and more difficult to evaluate and monitor and collateral may be more difficult to dispose of in a market decline.

First Financial Bank's acquisitions of Peoples and Irwin from the FDIC have caused us to modify our disclosure controls and procedures, which may not result in the material information that we are required to disclose in our Exchange Act reports being recorded, processed, summarized, and reported adequately.

Our management is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective disclosure controls and procedures that are designed to cause the material information that we are required to disclose in reports that we file or submit under the Exchange Act to be recorded, processed, summarized, and reported to the extent applicable within the time periods required by the SEC's rules and forms. Because of the timing of the acquisitions, the internal control over financial reporting of Peoples' and Irwin's banking operations were excluded from the evaluation of effectiveness of our disclosure controls and procedures from the time of acquisition through June 30, 2010, but have been included since that time. As a result of the Peoples and Irwin acquisitions, however, we have implemented changes to processes, information technology systems and other components of internal control over financial reporting as part of our integration activities. Notwithstanding any changes to our disclosure controls and

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procedures resulting from our evaluation of the same after the Peoples and Irwin acquisitions, our control systems, no matter how well designed and operated, may not result in the material information that we are required to disclose in our Exchange Act reports being recorded, processed, summarized, and reported adequately. Because of the inherent limitations in all control systems, no evaluation of controls can provide absolute assurance that all control issues and instances of fraud, if any, within our company have been detected.

Certain fair value estimates and other measures associated with the assets of Peoples and Irwin acquired from the FDIC, if materially inaccurate, could adversely affect our financial condition and results of operations.

We have determined that the acquisitions of the net assets of Peoples and Irwin constituted business combinations as defined under GAAP. Accordingly, the assets acquired and liabilities assumed have been presented by us in our financial statements at their fair values as required. In many cases, the determination of these fair values required management to make estimates about discount rates, future expected cash flows, market conditions and other future events that are highly subjective in nature. Under GAAP, these fair value estimates were considered preliminary and subject to change for up to one year after the closing dates of the acquisitions, as additional information relative to closing date fair values became available. The one year adjustment period for estimated fair market values expired at the end of the third quarter 2010. We and the FDIC are engaged in on-going discussions regarding indemnification with respect to certain actions taken by Irwin and its subsidiaries in connection with the purchase of certain assets and assumption of certain liabilities of Irwin by First Financial Bank from the FDIC as receiver. In addition, the tax treatment of FDIC-assisted acquisitions is complex and subject to interpretations that may result in future adjustments of deferred taxes as of the acquisition dates. Any future changes to such measures or determinations could adversely affect our financial condition and results of operations.

First Financial Bank's failure to fully comply with the loss-sharing provisions relating to its acquisitions of Peoples and Irwin from the FDIC could jeopardize the loss-share coverage afforded to certain individual or pools of assets, rendering First Financial Bank financially responsible for the full amount of any losses related to such assets. In connection with First Financial Bank's acquisitions of Peoples and Irwin from the FDIC, First Financial Bank entered into loss-sharing agreements with the FDIC whereby the FDIC has agreed to cover 80% of the losses on certain single family residential mortgage loans and certain commercial loans (together, covered assets), and 95% of the losses on such covered assets in excess of thresholds stated in the loss-sharing agreements. First Financial Bank's management of and application of the terms and conditions of the loss-sharing provisions of the Purchase and Assumption Agreements related to the covered assets is monitored by the FDIC through periodic reports that First Financial Bank must submit to the FDIC and on-site compliance visitations by the FDIC. If First Financial Bank fails to fully comply with its obligations under the loss-sharing provisions of the Purchase and Assumption Agreements relating to First Financial Bank's acquisitions of Peoples and Irwin from the FDIC, First Financial Bank could lose the benefit of the loss-share coverage as it applies to certain individual or pools of covered assets. Without such loss-share coverage, First Financial Bank would be solely financially responsible for the losses sustained by such individual or pools of assets.

The benefits of our FDIC loss-sharing agreements may be reduced or eliminated.

In connection with First Financial Bank's assumption of the banking operations of Peoples, Irwin Union Bank and Irwin FSB, the Bank and the FDIC entered into Whole Bank Purchase and Assumption Agreements with Loss-Share. Our decisions regarding the fair value of assets acquired, including the FDIC loss-sharing assets, could be inaccurate which could materially and adversely affect our business, financial condition, results of operations, and future prospects. Management makes various assumptions and judgments about the collectability of the acquired loans, including the creditworthiness of borrowers and the value of the real estate and other assets serving as collateral for the repayment of secured loans. In FDIC-assisted acquisitions that include loss-sharing agreements, we record a loss-sharing asset that reflects our estimate of the timing and amount of future losses that are anticipated to occur in and used to value the acquired loan portfolio. In determining the size of the loss-sharing asset, we analyze the loan portfolio based on historical loss experience, volume and classification of loans, volume and trends in delinquencies

and nonaccruals, local economic conditions, and other pertinent information.

If our assumptions relating to the timing or amount of expected losses are incorrect, there could be a negative impact on our operating results. Increases in the amount of future losses in response to different economic conditions or adverse developments in the acquired loan portfolio may result in increased credit loss provisions. Changes in our estimate of the timing of those losses, specifically if those losses are to occur beyond the applicable loss-sharing periods, may result in impairments of the FDIC indemnification asset.

Item 1B. Unresolved Staff Comments.

None.

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### Item 2. Properties.

The registrant and its subsidiaries operate from 124 banking centers. Its strategic operating markets are located within the three state regions of Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky, where it operates 65 banking centers located in Ohio, as well as First Financial's executive office in Cincinnati, Ohio; 55 banking centers located in Indiana; and 4 banking centers located in Kentucky.

### Item 3. Legal Proceedings.

We make the following disclosure in connection with the acquisition of certain assets and assumption of certain liabilities of Irwin Union Bank by First Financial Bank from the FDIC as receiver for Irwin Union Bank. The acquisition was completed pursuant to the Purchase Agreement dated September 18, 2009, as amended. Some of these claims involve Irwin Union Bank prior to it being placed in receivership and are thus the responsibility of the FDIC as receiver pursuant to the Purchase Agreement. Furthermore, with respect to the claims set forth below, First Financial Bank has or expects to submit requests for indemnification to the FDIC as receiver pursuant to Section 12 of the Purchase Agreement. Pursuant to the Purchase Agreement, the FDIC as receiver has agreed to indemnify and hold harmless First Financial Bank for certain claims against Irwin Union Bank and the former subsidiaries of Irwin Union Bank for actions taken on or prior to September 18, 2009. First Financial believes the matters discussed below qualify for indemnification. Furthermore, discussions are ongoing with the FDIC regarding indemnification with respect to certain actions taken by Irwin and its subsidiaries in connection with the purchase of certain assets and assumption of certain liabilities of Irwin by First Financial Bank from the FDIC as receiver.

#### Irwin Mortgage Corporation Bankruptcy

On July 8, 2011, Irwin Mortgage Corporation (IMC), a wholly-owned subsidiary of First Financial Bank, filed a voluntary bankruptcy petition under Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of Ohio (Bankruptcy Court), Case No. 11-57191. In its Declaration in Support of First Day Pleadings filed with the Bankruptcy Court (Declaration), IMC stated that it believes “[a] Chapter 11 filing (a) affords national jurisdiction to effectively and efficiently manage the numerous claims against IMC, many of which are pending in state and federal courts around the country; and (b) allows IMC to proceed as a debtor in possession with experienced and knowledgeable management to assist with the liquidation and the claims administration.”

The proof of claim bar date for non-governmental units was October 31, 2011. The proof of claim bar date for administrative claims was January 31, 2012. The proof of claim bar date for governmental units was January 13, 2012. On October 28, 2011, First Financial submitted a pre-petition claim to the bankruptcy court in the amount of approximately \$15.3 million. In addition, on January 27, 2012, First Financial filed an administrative claim of approximately \$33,000 with the bankruptcy court. On January 5, 2013, IMC and FFB reached a tentative settlement whereby all claim between the two entities would be resolved in a global settlement. If finalized, the plan is not expected to have a material adverse effect on the financial statements of First Financial. On January 5, 2013, IMC filed its plan of liquidation with the court and later filed a disclosure statement containing the general terms of the above settlement. It is expected that a definitive settlement agreement will be filed as a supplement to the plan and that would be filed prior to the confirmation hearing. Until the court approves the plan and all objection periods have passed, it is not possible to determine the eventual outcome in these matters.

IMC's consolidated results of operation were included in First Financial's results for the first six months of 2011. Effective July 1, 2011 IMC's consolidated balance sheet, and its results of operations from that date forward, are no longer included in First Financial's consolidated financial statements. As a result, litigation involving IMC will no longer be reported in First Financial filings.

#### Litigation with Freedom Mortgage Corporation.

On January 22, 2008, Irwin Union Bank and Trust Company (Irwin Union Bank) and Irwin Home Equity Corporation (IHE), filed suit against Freedom Mortgage Corporation (Freedom) in the United States District Court for the Northern District of California, Oakland Division, Irwin Union Bank, et al. v. Freedom Mortgage Corp. (the First California Action), for breach of contract and negligence arising out of Freedom's refusal to repurchase certain mortgage loans that Irwin Union Bank and/or IHE had purchased from Freedom. Irwin Union Bank and IHE are seeking damages in excess of \$8 million from Freedom.

In response, in March 2008, Freedom moved to compel arbitration of the claims asserted in the First California Action. Freedom has asserted claims against IHE and Irwin Union Bank in the arbitration and is seeking, among other things, damages exceeding \$8 million. Freedom also filed suit against Irwin Mortgage Corporation (Irwin Mortgage) and its former indirect parent, Irwin Financial Corporation (IFC), (now in Chapter 7 bankruptcy), in the United States District Court for the District of Delaware, Freedom Mortgage Corporation v. Irwin Financial Corporation et al., (the "Delaware Action"). Freedom alleged that the repurchase demands in the First California Action represent various breaches of an Asset Purchase Agreement dated as

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of August 7, 2007, which was entered into by IFC, Irwin Mortgage and Freedom in connection with the sale to Freedom of the majority of Irwin Mortgage's loan origination assets. In the Delaware Action, Freedom sought damages in excess of \$8 million and to compel IFC to order its (now former) subsidiaries in the First California Action to dismiss their claims.

In April 2008, the California district court stayed the First California Action pending completion of arbitration. The arbitration remains pending. The California district judge previously stated on the record that she would not hear Freedom's claims in the Delaware Action until the arbitration is completed.

On March 23, 2009, the Delaware district court granted Irwin's motion to transfer the Delaware Action to the Northern District of California, and ordered that the Delaware case be closed. The Delaware Action was transferred on March 30, 2009 and officially filed in the United States District Court for the Northern District of California, San Francisco Division, on March 31, 2009, Freedom Mortgage Corporation v. Irwin Financial Corporation and Irwin Mortgage Corporation (the "Second California Action").

As a result of the FDIC receivership of Irwin Union Bank, the bankruptcy of IFC, and the perceived desire of the parties to consider settlement options, several stipulations were entered into postponing various case management dates originally ordered by the court. No reserves have been established for this litigation.

On July 8, 2011, Irwin Mortgage filed a petition for relief under Chapter 11 of the United States Bankruptcy Code. As a result of the petition, an automatic stay came into effect with respect to Irwin Mortgage in this litigation.

On August 2, 2011, First Financial Bank made a claim for indemnification with respect to the subsidiaries. Conditional indemnification was granted on May 29, 2012.

### General Litigation

We and our subsidiaries are from time to time engaged in various matters of litigation, including the matters described above, other assertions of improper or fraudulent loan practices or lending violations, and other matters, and we have a number of unresolved claims pending. In addition, as part of the ordinary course of business, we and our subsidiaries are parties to litigation involving claims to the ownership of funds in particular accounts, the collection of delinquent accounts, challenges to security interests in collateral, and foreclosure interests, that is incidental to our regular business activities. While the ultimate liability with respect to these other litigation matters and claims cannot be determined at this time, we believe that damages, if any, and other amounts relating to pending matters are not likely to be material to our consolidated financial position or results of operations, except as described above. Reserves are established for these various matters of litigation, when appropriate under FASB ASC Topic 450, Contingencies, based in part upon the advice of legal counsel.

On at least a quarterly basis, First Financial assesses its liabilities and contingencies in connection with outstanding legal proceedings utilizing the latest information available. For those matters where it is probable that First Financial will incur a loss and the amount of the loss can be reasonably estimated, First Financial records a liability in its consolidated financial statements. These legal reserves may be increased or decreased to reflect any relevant developments on a quarterly basis. For other matters, where a loss is not probable or the amount of the loss is not estimable, First Financial has not accrued legal reserves. While the outcome of legal proceedings is inherently uncertain, based on information currently available, advice of counsel and available insurance coverage, First Financial's management believes that its established legal reserves are currently adequate. However, in the event of unexpected future developments, it is possible that the ultimate resolution of these matters, if unfavorable, may be material to First Financial's consolidated financial position, consolidated results of operations or consolidated cash flows.



Item 4. Mine Safety Disclosures.

Not applicable.

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## Executive Officers of First Financial Bancorp

Shown in the table below are the executive officers of First Financial Bancorp as of December 31, 2012. The executive officers are either officers of First Financial or officers of a subsidiary of First Financial who perform policy-making functions for First Financial. The officers are elected annually at the organizational meetings of the boards of directors of their respective affiliates and serve until the next organizational meeting, or until their successors are elected and duly qualified.

Name	Age	Position
Claude E. Davis	52	President & Chief Executive Officer
C. Douglas Lefferson	48	Executive Vice President & Chief Banking Officer
J. Franklin Hall <sup>(1)</sup>	44	Executive Vice President, Chief Financial Officer & Chief Operating Officer <sup>(1)</sup>
Anthony M. Stollings <sup>(1)</sup>	58	Executive Vice President & Chief Risk Officer <sup>(2)</sup>
Gregory A. Gehlmann	51	Executive Vice President & Chief General Counsel
Kevin T. Langford	45	Executive Vice President & Chief Administrative Officer
Alisa E. Poe	51	Executive Vice President & Chief Talent Officer
Jill A. Stanton	50	Executive Vice President & Co-Chief Retail Banking Officer
Jill L. Wyman	51	Executive Vice President & Co-Chief Retail Banking Officer
John M. Gavigan	34	First Vice President & Controller

(1) No longer in these positions effective January 18, 2013.

(2) Effective January 18, 2013, also Chief Financial Officer.

The following is a brief description of the business experience over the past five years of the individuals named above.

Claude E. Davis—President, Chief Executive Officer, and a member of the board of directors on October 1, 2004. Beginning August 23, 2005, Mr. Davis became the president, CEO, and chairman of the board of Bank. At the time he joined First Financial, Mr. Davis was senior vice president at Irwin Financial Corporation and chairman of Irwin Union Bank and Trust (the company's lead bank), positions he had held since May 2003 to his departure.

C. Douglas Lefferson—Executive Vice President and Chief Banking Officer since November 2010; Chief Operating Officer (April 2005–November 2010); and Chief Financial Officer (January 2002–April 2005). Mr. Lefferson has spent his entire banking career in various positions within the Company and its subsidiaries.

J. Franklin Hall—Executive Vice President, Chief Financial Officer, and Chief Operating Officer (designated Principle Accounting Officer on an interim basis until December 17, 2011) (September 2011 – January 17, 2013) and Chief Financial Officer (April 2005 – January 17, 2013). He has served other roles with affiliates of the Company, President of First Financial Capital Advisors, LLC (April 2007–December 31, 2010) and President of the First Funds family of proprietary mutual funds (December 2006–December 2009); and Controller (January 2002–April 2005). Mr. Hall joined First Financial in June of 1999.

Anthony M. Stollings—Executive Vice President, Chief Financial Officer and Chief Risk Officer since January 18, 2013. Mr. Stollings joined First Financial in December 2006 as Senior Vice President, Chief Accounting Officer and Controller. He has served as EVP and Chief Risk Officer since September 1, 2011. He previously spent 13 years with Provident Financial Group, Inc., a commercial banking and financial services company headquartered in Cincinnati, Ohio, where he was the Senior Vice President, Chief Accounting Officer and Controller from 2002 to 2004 and Senior Vice President and Controller from 1998 to 2002.

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Gregory A. Gehlmann—Executive Vice President and General Counsel since April 2010; has been general counsel since joining the Company in June 2005. From July 2006–August 2008, he assumed the additional responsibility of Chief Risk Officer. Prior to joining First Financial, Mr. Gehlmann practiced law for 16 years in Washington, D.C. From March 2000–June 2005, he served as partner/counsel at Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP, Washington, D.C., where he served as counsel to public and private companies, as well as investors, underwriters, directors, officers and principals regarding corporate securities, banking and general business and transactional matters.

Kevin T. Langford—Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer since November 2010. Mr. Langford joined First Financial in January 2006 as Senior Vice President, Chief Information Officer. Prior to joining First Financial, Mr. Langford served various technology and operational roles at Irwin Financial Corporation.

Alisa E. Poe—Executive Vice President and Chief Talent Officer since April 2010. Ms. Poe joined the company in September 2009 as Senior Vice President, Chief Human Resources Officer. Prior to joining First Financial, Ms. Poe was employed by The Midland Company where she served as vice president, corporate administration from 2007 to 2009, and director of Human Resources Operations from 2003 to 2007. Ms. Poe previously spent 7 years with Structural Dynamics Research Corporation (now part of Siemens) as director of Human Resource Services. She has spent over 20 years in the human resources profession and has experience leading all areas of human resources, including compensation, benefits, recruiting, training, associate relations and HR operations.

Jill A. Stanton—Executive Vice President and Co-Chief Retail Banking Officer since June 2010. Ms. Stanton joined First Financial as Senior Vice President, Retail and Small Business Lending in 2008. Prior to joining First Financial, she served as Senior Vice President at Irwin Union Bank and Trust Company, Columbus, Indiana.

Jill L. Wyman—Executive Vice President and Co-Chief Retail Banking Officer since June 2010. Ms. Wyman was Senior Vice President and Director of Marketing and Communications from 2004 to 2010. She joined First Financial in 2003 as Vice President and Sales Director.

John M. Gavigan—First Vice President and Corporate Controller (Principal Accounting Officer). Mr. Gavigan joined First Financial in September 2008 as assistant vice president and assistant controller, and was subsequently promoted to vice president and assistant controller in 2009, where he held that position until assuming his current position effective December 2011. Prior to joining First Financial, Mr. Gavigan was a manager with Protiviti Inc., a leading international provider of business and technology risk consulting services, where he specialized in financial reporting-related services.

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PART II

Item 5. Market for Registrant's Common Equity, Related Stockholder Matters and Issuer Purchases of Equity Securities.

(a) Market information, holders, dividends

First Financial's common stock is listed on The Nasdaq Global Select Stock Market® under the symbol "FFBC". The information contained in the "Quarterly Financial And Common Stock Data" in First Financial's Annual Report to Shareholders for the year ended December 31, 2012 with respect to our stock price and dividends, is incorporated herein by reference in response to this item.

As of February 22, 2013, our common stock was held by approximately 3,054 shareholders of record, a number that does not include beneficial owners who hold shares in "street name", or shareholders from previously acquired companies that have not exchanged their stock. At December 31, 2012, a total of 1,991,375 stock options and 518,756 shares of restricted stock were outstanding. Additional information about stock options, restricted stock and restricted stock units is included in Note 20 of the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements in First Financial's Annual Report to Shareholders for the year ended December 31, 2012 and in Item 12 below.

The payment of future cash dividends is at the discretion of our Board and subject to a number of factors, including results of operations, general business conditions, growth, financial condition and other factors deemed relevant by the Board of Directors. Further, our ability to pay future cash dividends is subject to certain regulatory requirements and restrictions discussed in the Supervision and Regulation section in Item 1 above. For further information see Note 6 of the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements of First Financial's Annual Report to Shareholders, which is incorporated by reference in response to this item.

We have a dividend reinvestment plan that permits shareholder participants to purchase shares at the then-current market price in lieu of the receipt of cash dividends. Shares issued in connection with the dividend reinvestment plan are purchased in open market transactions.

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## Equity Compensation Plan Information

The following table sets forth information as of December 31, 2012 with respect to compensation plans under which shares of our common stock may be issued:

## Securities authorized for issuance under equity compensation plans

Plan category	Number of securities to be issued upon exercise of outstanding options, warrants and rights	Weighted-average exercise price of outstanding options, warrants and rights	Number of securities remaining available for future issuance under equity compensation plans (excluding securities reflected in column (a))
	(a)	(b)	(c) (1)
Equity compensation plans approved by security holders	1,991,375	\$14.13	1,789,529
Equity compensation plans not approved by security holders	N/A	N/A	N/A

(1) The securities included in this column are available for issuance under the First Financial Bancorp. 2012 Stock Plan (2012 Plan), 2009 Employee Stock Plan (Stock Plan), 2009 Non-Employee Director Stock Plan (Director Plan), 1999 Stock Option Plan for Non-Employee Directors (1999 Directors Plan) and the 1999 Stock Incentive Plan for Officers and Employees (Incentive Plan). All five plans include provisions regarding adjustments to the number of securities available for future issuance under the respective plans in the event of a merger, reorganization, consolidation, recapitalization, reclassification, split-up, spin-off, separation, liquidation, stock dividend, stock split, reverse stock split, property dividend, share repurchase, share combination, share exchange, issuance of warrants, rights or debentures or other change in corporate structure of First Financial affecting First Financial's common shares. In any of the foregoing events, the Director Plan permits the Board of Directors and the Incentive Plan permits the Board of Directors or the Compensation Committee to make such substitution or adjustments in the aggregate number and kind of shares available for issuance under the respective plans as the Board of Directors (or, in the cases of the Stock Plan and the Incentive Plan, the Compensation Committee) may determine to be appropriate in its sole discretion. Of the securities reported in column (c) 43,623 are available for future issuance under the Director Plan and 1,745,906 are available under the 2012 Plan.

N/A - Not applicable.

## Stock Performance Graph

The stock performance graph contained in "Total Return to Shareholders" of First Financial Bancorp's Annual Report to Shareholders for the year ended December 31, 2012, is incorporated herein by reference in response to this item.

## (b) Unregistered Sales of Equity Securities and Use of Proceeds

N/A.

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(c) The following table shows the total number of shares repurchased in the fourth quarter of 2012.

## Issuer Purchases of Equity Securities

Period	(a) Total Number of Shares Purchased <sup>(1)</sup>	(b) Average Price Paid Per Share	(c) Total Number of Shares Purchased as Part of Publicly Announced Plans <sup>(2)</sup>	(d) Maximum Number of Shares that may yet be purchased Under the Plans
October 1 to October 31, 2012				
Share repurchase program	0	\$0.00	0	5,000,000
Director Fee Stock Plan	2,868	16.44	NA	NA
Stock Plans	17,900	16.94	NA	NA
November 1 to November 30, 2012				
Share repurchase program	345,000	\$14.89	345,000	4,655,000
Director Fee Stock Plan	0	0.00	NA	NA
Stock Plans	6,151	14.43	NA	NA
December 1 to December 31, 2012				
Share repurchase program	115,500	\$14.44	115,500	4,539,500
Director Fee Stock Plan	0	0.00	NA	NA
Stock Plans	0	0.00	NA	NA
Total				
Share repurchase program	460,500	\$14.78	460,500	
Director Fee Stock Plan	2,868	\$16.44	NA	
Stock Plans	24,051	\$16.30	NA	

Except with respect to the share repurchase program, the number of shares purchased in column (a) and the average price paid per share in column (b) include the purchase of shares other than through publicly announced plans. The shares purchased other than through publicly announced plans were purchased pursuant to First Financial's Director Fee Stock Plan, 1999 Stock Option Plan for Non-Employee Directors, 1999 Stock Incentive (1) Plan for Officers and Employees, 2009 Employee Stock Plan, Amended and Restated 2009 Non-Employee Director Stock Plan and 2012 Stock Plan (the last five plans are referred to hereafter as the Stock Plans.) The table shows the number of shares purchased pursuant to those plans and the average price paid per share. The purchases for the Director Fee Stock Plan were made in open-market transactions. Under the Stock Plans, shares were purchased from plan participants at the then current market value in satisfaction of stock option exercise prices. First Financial has one remaining previously announced stock repurchase plan under which it is currently (2) authorized to purchase shares of its common stock. The plan has no expiration date. The table that follows provides additional information regarding this plan.

Announcement Date	Total Shares Approved for Repurchase	Total Shares Repurchased Under The Plan	Expiration Date
10/25/2012	5,000,000	460,500	None

Item 6. Selected Financial Data.

The information contained in Table 1 of the Management's Discussion and Analysis section of First Financial's Annual Report to Shareholders for the year ended December 31, 2012, is incorporated herein by reference in response to this item.



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### Item 7. Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results Of Operations.

The information contained in the Management's Discussion and Analysis section (including certain forward looking statements) of First Financial's Annual Report to Shareholders for the year ended December 31, 2012 (included as Exhibit 13 of this report) is incorporated herein by reference in response to this item.

See a discussion in the Risk Factors section in Part 1A of this report.

### Item 7A. Quantitative and Qualitative Disclosure About Market Risk

The information contained in the Market Risk section and in Table 17-Market Risk Disclosure of the Management's Discussion and Analysis in First Financial's Annual Report to Shareholders for the year ended December 31, 2012, is incorporated herein by reference in response to this item.

### Item 8. Financial Statements and Supplementary Data.

The consolidated financial statements and the reports of our independent registered public accounting firm included in the Consolidated Financial Statements and the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements in First Financial's Annual Report to Shareholders for the year ended December 31, 2012, are incorporated herein by reference.

The Quarterly Financial and Common Stock Data at the end of the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements in First Financial's Annual Report to Shareholders for the year ended December 31, 2012, is incorporated herein by reference.

### Item 9. Changes in and Disagreements with Accountants on Accounting and Financial Disclosure.

None.

### Item 9A. Controls and Procedures.

#### Evaluation of Disclosure Controls and Procedures

Management is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective disclosure controls and procedures, as defined under Rule 13a-15 of the Exchange Act that are designed to cause the material information required to be disclosed by First Financial in the reports it files or submits under the Exchange Act to be recorded, processed, summarized, and reported to the extent applicable within the time periods required by the Securities and Exchange Commission's rules and forms (the disclosure controls and procedures). In designing and evaluating the disclosure controls and procedures, management recognizes that a control system, no matter how well designed and operated, can provide only reasonable, not absolute, assurance that the objectives of the control system are met. Because of the inherent limitations in all control systems, no evaluation of controls can provide absolute assurance that all control issues and instances of fraud, if any, within a company have been detected.

First Financial's chief executive officer and chief financial officer, together with other members of senior management, have evaluated the disclosure controls and procedures as of the end of the period covered by this report. Based upon that evaluation, First Financial's chief executive officer and chief financial officer have concluded that the disclosure controls and procedures are effective (i) to ensure that material information relating to First Financial, including its consolidated subsidiaries, is communicated to them on a timely basis, and (ii) to accomplish the purposes for which they were designed.

#### Internal Control Over Financial Reporting

Management's Report On Internal Control Over Financial Reporting and the Report Of Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm included in First Financial's Annual Report to Shareholders for the year ended December 31, 2012, are incorporated herein by reference.

#### Changes in Internal Controls

First Financial maintains a system of internal accounting controls, which includes internal control over financial reporting, that is designed to provide reasonable assurance that First Financial's financial records can be relied upon for preparation of its financial statements and that its assets are safeguarded against loss from unauthorized use or disposition. There were no other changes in First Financial's internal control over financial reporting that have materially affected, or are reasonably likely to materially affect, First Financial's internal control over financial reporting.

Item 9B. Other Information.

None.

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PART III

Item 10. Directors, Executive Officers and Corporate Governance.

Information appearing under “Election of Directors,” “Meetings of the Board of Directors and Committees of the Board,” “Corporate Governance,” and “Compliance with Section 16(a) of the Exchange Act” of First Financial's Definitive Proxy Statement with respect to the Annual Meeting of Shareholders to be held on May 28, 2013, and which is expected to be filed with the SEC, pursuant to Regulation 14A of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (First Financial's Proxy Statement) within 120 days of the close of our fiscal year, is incorporated herein by reference in response to this item.

First Financial has adopted a code of ethics, the First Financial Bancorp. Code of Business Conduct, which applies to First Financial's directors, officers and employees. In addition, the Company maintains a Code of Ethics for the CEO and Senior Financial Officers. Both documents are available through First Financial's website, [www.bankatfirst.com](http://www.bankatfirst.com) under the “Investor Information” link, under “Corporate Governance.”

Item 11. Executive Compensation.

The information appearing under "Meetings of the Board of Directors and Committees of the Board," "Compensation Discussion and Analysis," "Executive Compensation," "Compensation Committee Interlocks and Insider Participation," and "Compensation Committee Report" of First Financial's Proxy Statement is incorporated herein by reference in response to this item.

Item 12. Security Ownership of Certain Beneficial Owners and Management and Related Stockholder Matters.

The information appearing under “Securities Authorized for Issuance Under Equity Compensation Plans” set forth in Part II, Item 5 and "Shareholdings of Directors, Executive Officers, and Nominees for Director" of First Financial's Proxy Statement is incorporated herein by reference in response to this item.

Item 13. Certain Relationships and Related Transactions.

The information appearing in Note 21 of the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements included in First Financial's Annual Report to Shareholders is incorporated herein by reference in response to this item. Reference is also made to information appearing under “Corporate Governance - Transactions with Related Parties” of First Financial's Proxy Statement in response to this item.

Item 14. Principal Accounting Fees and Services.

Information appearing under “Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm Fees” of First Financial's Proxy Statement is incorporated herein by reference in response to this item.

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PART IV

Item 15. Exhibits, Financial Statement Schedules.

(a) Documents filed as a part of the Report:

Reports of Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm

Consolidated Balance Sheets as of December 31, 2012 and 2011

Consolidated Statements of Income for years ended December 31, 2012, 2011, and 2010

Consolidated Statements of Comprehensive Income for years ended December 31, 2012, 2011, and 2010

Consolidated Statements of Changes in Shareholders' Equity for the years ended December 31, 2012, 2011, and 2010

Consolidated Statements of Cash Flows for years ended December 31, 2012, 2011, and 2010

Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements

(2) Financial Statement Schedules:

Schedules to the consolidated financial statements required by Regulation S-X are not required under the related instructions, or are inapplicable, and therefore have been omitted

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(13) Exhibits:

Exhibit

Number

2.1	Purchase and Assumption Agreement Whole Bank All Deposits, among the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, receiver of Peoples Community Bank, West Chester, Ohio, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and First Financial Bank, National Association, dated as of July 31, 2009 (filed as Exhibit 2.1 to the Registrant's Current Report on Form 8-K filed on July 31, 2009 and incorporated herein by reference) (Certain schedules and exhibits have been omitted pursuant to Item 601(b)(2) of Regulation S-K).
2.2	Purchase and Assumption Agreement Modified Whole Bank All Deposits, among the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, receiver of Irwin Union Bank and Trust Company, Columbus, Indiana, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and First Financial, dated as of September 18, 2009 (filed as Exhibit 2.1 to the Registrant's Current Report on Form 8-K filed on September 23, 2009 and incorporated herein by reference) (Certain schedules and exhibits have been omitted pursuant to Item 601(b)(2) of Regulation S-K).
2.3	Purchase and Assumption Agreement Modified Whole Bank All Deposits, among the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, receiver of Irwin Union Bank, F.S.B., Louisville, Kentucky, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and First Financial, dated as of September 18, 2009 (filed as Exhibit 2.2 to the Registrant's Current Report on Form 8-K filed on September 23, 2009 and incorporated herein by reference) (Certain schedules and exhibits have been omitted pursuant to Item 601(b)(2) of Regulation S-K).
3.1	Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation (filed as Exhibit 3.1 to the Registrant's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2007, and incorporated herein by reference).
3.2	Certificate of Amendment by the Board of Directors to the Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation (filed as Exhibit 3.1 to the Registrant's Current Report on Form 8-K filed on December 24, 2008, and incorporated herein by reference).
3.3	Certificate of Amendment by Shareholders to the Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation (filed as Exhibit 4.2 to the Form S-3 filed on January 21, 2009, and incorporated herein by reference, Registration No. 333-156841).
3.4	Amended and Restated Regulations, as amended as of May 1, 2007 (filed as Exhibit 3.2 to the Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2007 and incorporated herein by reference).
3.5	Article Fifth of the Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation of FFBC (filed as Exhibit 3.1 to the Registrant's Current Report on Form 8-K filed on May 27, 2011 and incorporated herein by reference).
3.6	Amended Article II, Section 2.2 of the Regulations of FFBC (filed as Exhibit 3.2 to the Registrant's Current Report on Form 8-K filed on May 27, 2011 and incorporated herein by reference).
4.1	Letter Agreement, dated as of December 23, 2008, between the Registrant and the United States Department of the Treasury, which includes the Securities Purchase Agreement – Standard Terms (filed as Exhibit 10.1 to the Registrant's Current Report on Form 8-K filed on December 30, 2008, and incorporated herein by reference).
4.2	Warrant to Purchase up to 930,233 shares of Common Stock dated as of December 23, 2008 (filed as Exhibit 4.1 to the Form 8-K filed on December 30, 2008 and incorporated herein by reference).
4.3	No instruments defining the rights of holders of long-term debt of First Financial are filed herewith. Pursuant to (b)(4)(iii) of Item 601 of Regulation S-K, First Financial agrees to furnish a copy of any such agreements to the Securities and Exchange Commission upon request.
10.1	First Financial Bancorp. Dividend Reinvestment and Share Purchase Plan, dated April 24, 1997 (incorporated herein by reference to a Registration Statement on Form S-3, Registration No. 333-25745).
10.2	First Financial Bancorp. 1999 Stock Incentive Plan for Officers and Employees, dated April 27, 1999 (incorporated herein by reference to a Registration Statement on Form S-3, Registration No. 333-86781).*
10.3	First Financial Bancorp. 1999 Non-Employee Director Stock Plan, as dated April 27, 1999 and amended and restated as of April 26, 2006 (filed as Exhibit 10.11 to the Form 10-Q for the quarter ended March 31, 2006 and incorporated herein by reference).*
10.4	

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- 10.5 First Financial Bancorp. Director Fee Stock Plan amended and restated effective April 20, 2004 (filed as Exhibit 10.12 to the Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2004 and incorporated herein by reference).\*
- 10.6 Form of Executive Supplemental Retirement Agreement (filed as Exhibit 10.7 to the Form 10-Q for the quarter ended March 31, 2010 and incorporated herein by reference).\*
- 10.7 Form of Endorsement Method Split Dollar Agreement (filed as Exhibit 10.8 to the Form 10-Q for the quarter ended March 31, 2010 and incorporated herein by reference).\*
- 10.8 First Financial Bancorp. Amended and Restated Deferred Compensation Plan (filed as Exhibit 10.9 to the Form 10-Q for the quarter ended March 31, 2010 and incorporated herein by reference).\*
- 10.8 Form of Stock Option Agreement for Incentive Stock Options (2005 – 2008) (filed as Exhibit 10.1 to the Form 8-K filed on April 22, 2005 and incorporated herein by reference).\*

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10.9	Form of Stock Option Agreement for Non-Qualified Stock Options (2005-2008) (filed as Exhibit 10.2 to the Form 8-K filed on April 22, 2005 and incorporated herein by reference).*
10.10	Amended and Restated Employment and Non-Competition Agreement between Claude E. Davis and First Financial Bancorp. dated December 30, 2011, and incorporated herein by reference to Exhibit 10.1 to First Financial Bancorp's Form 8-K filed on January 5, 2012.*
10.11	Amended and Restated Employment and Non-Competition Agreement between C. Douglas Lefferson and First Financial Bancorp. dated December 31, 2010, and incorporated herein by reference to Exhibit 10.1 to First Financial Bancorp's Form 8-K filed on January 3, 2011.*
10.12	Amended and Restated Employment and Non-Competition Agreement between J. Franklin Hall and First Financial Bancorp. dated January 1, 2011, and incorporated herein by reference to Exhibit 10.1 to First Financial Bancorp's Form 8-K filed on January 3, 2011.*
10.13	Amended and Restated Employment and Non-Competition Agreement between Gregory A. Gehlmann and First Financial Bancorp. dated December 31, 2010, and incorporated herein by reference to Exhibit 10.1 to First Financial Bancorp's Form 8-K filed on January 3, 2011.*
10.14	First Financial Bancorp. Amended and Restated Key Management Severance Plan as approved February 26, 2008 (filed as Exhibit 10.21 to the Form 10-Q filed on May 9, 2008 and incorporated herein by reference).*
10.15	Form of Agreement for Restricted Stock Award (2008) (filed as Exhibit 10.22 to the Form 10-Q filed on May 9, 2008 and incorporated herein by reference).*
10.16	Form of Waiver, executed by each of Messrs. Claude E. Davis, C. Douglas Lefferson, J. Franklin Hall, Samuel J. Munafo and Gregory A. Gehlmann dated as of December 23, 2008 (filed as Exhibit 10.2 to the Form 8-K filed on December 30, 2008 and incorporated herein by reference).*
10.17	Form of Letter Agreement, executed by each of Messrs. Claude E. Davis, C. Douglas Lefferson, J. Franklin Hall, Samuel J. Munafo and Gregory A. Gehlmann dated as of December 23, 2008 (filed as Exhibit 10.3 to the Form 8-K filed on December 30, 2008 and incorporated herein by reference).*
10.18	First Financial Bancorp. 2009 Employee Stock Plan (filed as Appendix A to the DEF 14A Definitive Proxy Statement filed on April 23, 2009 and incorporated herein by reference).*
10.19	First Financial Bancorp. Amended and Restated 2009 Non-Employee Director Stock Plan (filed as Appendix B to the DEF 14 Definitive Proxy Statement filed on April 13, 2012 and incorporated herein by reference).*
10.20	Form of Agreement for Restricted Stock Awards for 2009 Awards under the First Financial Bancorp. 1999 Stock Incentive Plan for Officers and Employees (filed as Exhibit 10.30 for the Form 10-Q filed on November 16, 2009 and incorporated herein by reference).*
10.21	Form of Agreement for Restricted Stock Awards for Awards under the First Financial Bancorp. 2009 Employee Stock Plan (filed as Exhibit 10.31 for the Form 10-Q filed on November 16, 2009 and incorporated herein by reference).*
10.22	Executive Supplemental Savings Agreement between Claude E. Davis and First Financial Bancorp. Dated August 25, 2008 (filed as Exhibit 10.31 to the Form10-Q for the quarter ended March 31, 2010 and incorporated herein by reference).*
10.23	Form of Amended and Restated Agreement for Restricted Stock Award (2009) for NEOs/Top Five Compensated Employees (filed as Exhibit 10.32 to the Form10-Q for the quarter ended March 31, 2010 and incorporated herein by reference).*
10.24	Form of Agreement for Restricted Stock Awards under the First Financial Bancorp. 2009 Employee Plan (3-year vesting/accrual of dividends) (filed as Exhibit 10.33 to the Form10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2010 and incorporated herein by reference).*
10.25	Form of Agreement for Restricted Stock Awards under the First Financial Bancorp. 2009 Non-Employee Directors Stock Plan (filed as Exhibit 10.34 to the Form10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2010 and incorporated herein by reference).*

- 10.26 First Financial Bancorp. Short-Term Incentive Plan (filed as Appendix C to the DEF 14A Definitive Proxy Statement filed on April 19, 2011 and incorporated herein by reference).\*
- 10.27 Terms of First Financial Bancorp. Short-Term Incentive Plan (2012) (incorporated herein by reference to the Form 8-K filed on March 2, 2012).\*
- 10.28 Form of Agreement for Restricted Stock Award under the First Financial Bancorp. 2009 Employee Stock Plan (2011-12 grants) (filed as Exhibit 10.1 to the Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2011 and incorporated herein by reference).\*
- 10.29 First Financial Bancorp. 2012 Stock Plan (filed as Appendix A to the DEF 14A Definitive Proxy Statement filed on April 13, 2012 and incorporated herein by reference).\*



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13	Registrant's annual report to shareholders for the year ended December 31, 2012.
14.1	First Financial Bancorp. Code of Conduct, as approved October 23, 2012 (filed as Exhibit 10.1 to the Registrant's Current Report on Form 8-K filed on October 29, 2012 and incorporated herein by reference).
14.2	Code of Ethics for the CEO and Senior Financial Officers (filed as Exhibit 10.2 to the Registrant's Current Report on Form 8-K filed on October 29, 2012 and incorporated herein by reference).
21	First Financial Bancorp. Subsidiaries.
23	Consent of Ernst & Young LLP, Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm.
31.1	Certification by Chief Executive Officer Pursuant to Section 302 of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 filed herewith.
31.2	Certification by Chief Financial Officer Pursuant to Section 302 of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 filed herewith.
32.1	Certification of Periodic Financial Report by Chief Executive Officer Pursuant to Section 906 of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 furnished herewith.
32.2	Certification of Periodic Financial Report by Chief Financial Officer Pursuant to Section 906 of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 furnished herewith.
101.1	Financial statements from the Quarterly Report on Form 10-K of the Company for the year ended December 31, 2012, formatted in XBRL: (i) Consolidated Balance Sheets, (ii) Consolidated Statements of Income, (iii) Consolidated Statements of Cash Flows, (iv) Consolidated Statements of Shareholders' Equity, and (v) Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements, as blocks of text and in detail.**

First Financial will furnish, without charge, to a security holder upon request a copy of the documents, portions of which are incorporated by reference (Annual Report to Shareholders and Proxy Statement), and will furnish any other Exhibit upon payment of reproductions costs. Unless as otherwise noted, documents incorporated by reference involve File No. 000-12379.

\* Compensation plan(s) or arrangement(s).

\*\* As provided in Rule 406T of Regulation S-T, this information shall not be deemed "filed" for purposes of Section 11 and 12 of the Securities Act of 1933 and Section 18 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 or otherwise subject to liability under those sections.

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SIGNATURES

Pursuant to the requirements of Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, the registrant has duly caused this report to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereunto duly authorized.

FIRST FINANCIAL BANCORP.

By: /s/ Claude E. Davis  
Claude E. Davis, Director  
President and Chief Executive Officer

Date 2/25/2013

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, the report has been signed below by the following persons on behalf of the registrant and in the capacities and on the dates indicated.

/s/ Claude E. Davis  
Claude E. Davis, Director  
President and Chief Executive Officer

Date 2/25/2013

/s/ Murph Knapke  
Murph Knapke, Director  
Chairman of the Board

Date 2/25/2013

/s/ J. Wickliffe Ach  
J. Wickliffe Ach, Director

Date 2/25/2013

/s/ Cynthia O. Booth  
Cynthia O. Booth, Director

Date 2/25/2013

/s/ Mark A. Collar  
Mark A. Collar, Director

Date 2/25/2013

/s/ Anthony M. Stollings  
Anthony M. Stollings  
Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer

Date 2/25/2013

/s/ John M. Gavigan  
John M. Gavigan, First Vice President and Corporate  
Controller  
(Principal Accounting Officer)

Date 2/25/2013

/s/ David S. Barker  
David S. Barker, Director

Date 2/25/2013

/s/ Donald M. Cisle  
Donald M. Cisle, Director

Date 2/25/2013

/s/ Corinne R. Finnerty  
Corinne R. Finnerty, Director

Date 2/25/2013

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/s/ Susan L. Knust  
Susan L. Knust, Director

Date 2/25/2013

/s/ Richard E. Olszewski  
Richard E. Olszewski, Director

Date 2/25/2013

/s/ William J. Kramer  
William J. Kramer, Director

Date 2/25/2013

/s/ Maribeth S. Rahe  
Maribeth S. Rahe, Director

Date 2/25/2013