

FIRST FINANCIAL BANCORP /OH/

Form S-3

January 21, 2009

As filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on January 21, 2009

Registration No. 333-

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

FORM S-3  
REGISTRATION STATEMENT UNDER THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933

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.)

First Financial Bancorp.  
4000 Smith Road  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45209  
(513) 979-5837  
(Address, including zip code, and telephone number,  
including area code, of Registrant's principal executive offices)

Gregory A. Gehlmann  
Senior Vice President and General Counsel  
First Financial Bancorp.  
4000 Smith Road  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45209  
(513) 979-5772  
(Name, address, including zip code, and telephone number,  
including area code, of agent for service)

Copies to:

Aaron A. Seamon, Esq.  
Squire, Sanders & Dempsey L.L.P.  
221 E. 4th Street Suite 2900  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202  
(513) 361-1200

Approximate date of commencement of proposed sale to the public: From time to time after the effective date of this registration statement.

If the only securities being registered on this Form are being offered pursuant to dividend or interest reinvestment

plans, please check the following box.  F

If any of the securities being registered on this Form are to be offered on a delayed or continuous basis pursuant to Rule 415 under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the "Securities Act"), other than securities offered only in connection with dividend or interest reinvestment plans, check the following box.  R

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If this Form is filed to register additional securities for an offering pursuant to Rule 462(b) under the Securities Act, please check the following box and list the Securities Act registration statement number of the earlier effective registration statement for the same offering.

If this Form is a post-effective amendment filed pursuant to Rule 462(c) under the Securities Act, check the following box and list the Securities Act registration statement number of the earlier effective registration statement for the same offering.

If this Form is a registration statement pursuant to General Instruction I.D. or a post-effective amendment thereto that shall become effective upon filing with the Commission pursuant to Rule 462(e) under the Securities Act, check the following box.

If this Form is a post-effective amendment to a registration statement filed pursuant to General Instruction I.D. filed to register additional securities or additional classes of securities pursuant to Rule 413(b) under the Securities Act, check the following box.

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 the 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   
 (Do not check if a smaller reporting company)

CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE

Title of Each Class of Securities to be Registered	Amount to be Registered	Proposed Maximum Offering Price Per Share(3)	Proposed Maximum Aggregate Offering Price(3)	Amount of Registration Fee
Fixed Rate Cumulative Perpetual Preferred Stock, Series A, without par value per share	80,000	\$ 1,000(1)	\$ 80,000,000	\$ 3,144
Warrant to Purchase Common Shares, without par value per share, and underlying Common Shares (2)	930,233	\$ 12.90(3)	\$ 12,000,006	\$ 472
<b>Total:</b>			<b>\$ 92,000,006</b>	<b>\$ 3,616</b>

(1) Calculated in accordance with Rule 457(a) and includes such additional number of shares of Fixed Rate Cumulative Perpetual Preferred Stock, Series A, of a currently indeterminable amount, as may from time to time become issuable by reason of stock splits, stock dividends or similar transactions.

(2) In addition to the Fixed Rate Cumulative Perpetual Preferred Stock, Series A, there are being registered hereunder (a) a warrant for the purchase of 930,233 common shares with an initial per share exercise price of \$12.90, (b) the 930,233 common shares issuable upon exercise of such warrant and (c) such additional number of common shares, of a currently indeterminable amount, as may from time to time become issuable by reason of stock splits, stock dividends and certain antidilution provisions set forth in such warrant, which shares of common stock are registered hereunder pursuant to Rule 416.

(3) Calculated in accordance with Rule 457(i) with respect to the per share exercise price of the warrant of \$12.90.

We hereby amend this Registration Statement on such date or dates as may be necessary to delay its effective date until we file a further amendment which specifically states that this Registration Statement shall thereafter become effective in accordance with Section 8(a) of the Securities Act of 1933, or until the Registration Statement shall become effective on such date as the Securities and Exchange Commission, acting pursuant to said Section 8(a), may determine.

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The information in this prospectus is not complete and may be changed. The selling securityholders may not sell these securities until the registration statement filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission is effective. This prospectus is not an offer to sell these securities and is not soliciting an offer to buy these securities in any state or jurisdiction where the offer or sale is not permitted.

SUBJECT TO COMPLETION, DATED JANUARY 21, 2009

PROSPECTUS

First Financial Bancorp.

Fixed Rate Cumulative Perpetual Preferred Stock, Series A  
Warrant to Purchase 930,233 Common Shares  
930,233 Common Shares

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This prospectus relates to the potential resale from time to time by selling securityholders of some or all of the shares of our Fixed Rate Cumulative Perpetual Preferred Stock, Series A, which we refer to as our Series A preferred stock, a warrant to purchase 930,233 of our common shares, which we also refer to as common stock, issuable from time to time upon exercise of the warrant. In this prospectus, we refer to the Series A preferred stock, the warrant and the shares of common stock issuable upon exercise of the Warrant, collectively, as the securities. The Series A preferred stock and the Warrant were originally issued by us pursuant to the Letter Agreement dated December 23, 2008, incorporating the terms of the Securities Purchase Agreement — Standard Terms, between us and the United States Department of the Treasury, which we refer to as the initial selling securityholder, in a transaction exempt from the registration requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, or the Securities Act.

The initial selling securityholder and its successors, including transferees, which we collectively refer to as the selling securityholders, may offer the securities from time to time directly or through underwriters, broker-dealers or agents and in one or more public or private transactions and at fixed prices, prevailing market prices, at prices related to prevailing market prices or at negotiated prices. If these securities are sold through underwriters, broker-dealers or agents, the selling securityholders will be responsible for underwriting discounts or commissions or agents' commissions.

We will not receive any proceeds from any sale of the securities by the selling securityholders.

The Series A preferred stock is not listed on an exchange, and, unless requested by the initial selling securityholder, we do not intend to list the Series A preferred stock on any exchange.

Our common stock is listed on the Nasdaq Global Select Market under the symbol "FFBC." On January 20, 2009, the last reported sale price of our common stock on the Nasdaq Global Select Market was \$8.18 per share. You are urged to obtain current market quotations of the common stock.

Investing in the securities involves a high degree of risk. See the section entitled "Risk Factors" on page 3 of this prospectus and in the documents we filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission that are incorporated in this prospectus by reference for certain risks and uncertainties you should consider.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or passed upon the adequacy of this prospectus. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense in the United States.

These securities are unsecured and are not deposits and are not insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation

or any other governmental agency.

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This prospectus is dated \_\_\_\_\_, 2009.

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(i)

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## ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS

This prospectus is part of a registration statement on Form S-3 that we filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the “SEC”) using a “shelf” registration process. Under this process, the selling securityholders may, from time to time, offer and sell, in one or more offerings, the securities described in this prospectus.

You should rely only on the information contained in this prospectus. We have not authorized anyone to provide you with information different from that contained in this prospectus. This prospectus is offering to sell, and is seeking offers to buy, the securities only in jurisdictions where offers and sales are permitted. The information contained in this prospectus is accurate only as of the date of this prospectus.

We may provide a prospectus supplement containing specific information about the terms of a particular offering by the selling securityholders. The prospectus supplement may add, update or change information in this prospectus. If the information in this prospectus is inconsistent with a prospectus supplement, you should rely on the information in that prospectus supplement. You should read both this prospectus and, if applicable, any prospectus supplement. See “Where You Can Find More Information” for more information.

In this prospectus, the “company,” “we,” “us,” “our,” and “FFBC” refer to First Financial Bancorp. and its consolidated subsidiaries, collectively.

## WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

We file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC. You may read and copy any document that we file at the SEC’s public reference room at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549. Please call the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330 for further information on the public reference room. Our SEC filings are also available to the public from the SEC’s website at <http://www.sec.gov>.

The SEC allows us to incorporate by reference the information we file with it, which means that we can disclose important information to you by referring you to those documents. The information incorporated by reference is considered to be part of this prospectus, and later information that we file with the SEC will automatically update and supersede this information. We incorporate by reference the following documents listed below and any future filings (other than current reports or portions thereof furnished under Item 2.02 or Item 7.01 of Form 8-K) made with the SEC under Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14, or 15(d) of the Exchange Act, prior to the termination of the offering:

- Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2007;
- Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarters ended March 31, 2008, June 30, 2008, and September 30, 2008; and
- Current Reports on Form 8-K filed on February 25, 2008, October 1, 2008 (on Form 8-K/A), October 20, 2008, December 8, 2008, December 24, 2008, and December 30, 2008.

You may request a copy of these filings, at no cost, by writing or telephoning us at the following address:

First Financial Bancorp.  
4000 Smith Rd., Suite 400  
Cincinnati, OH 45209  
Telephone: (513) 979-5837  
Attention: Investor Relations





SPECIAL CAUTIONARY NOTICE  
REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

Certain statements contained in this prospectus which are not statements of historical fact constitute forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act (the "Act"). In addition, certain statements in future filings by us with the SEC, in press releases, and in oral and written statements made by or with our approval which are not statements of historical fact constitute forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Act. Examples of forward-looking statements include, but are not limited to, projections of revenues, income or loss, earnings or loss per share, the payment or non-payment of dividends, capital structure and other financial items; statements of plans and objectives of us or our management or board of directors; and statements of future economic performance and statements of assumptions underlying such statements. Words such as "believes," "anticipates," "intends," and other similar expressions are intended to identify forward-looking statements but are not the exclusive means of identifying such statements.

Forward-looking statements involve risks and uncertainties that may cause actual results to differ materially from those in such statements. Factors that could cause actual results to differ from those discussed in the forward-looking statements include, but are not limited to,

- management's ability to effectively execute its business plan;
- the risk that the strength of the United States economy in general and the strength of the local economies in which we conduct operations may be different than expected resulting in, among other things, a deterioration in credit quality or a reduced demand for credit, including the resultant effect on our loan portfolio and allowance for loan and lease losses;
  - the effects of and changes in policies and laws of regulatory agencies;
  - inflation, interest rates, market and monetary fluctuations;
    - technological changes;
    - mergers and acquisitions;
  - our ability to increase market share and control expenses;
  - our ability to retain key members of our organization;
- the effect of changes in accounting policies and practices, as may be adopted by the regulatory agencies as well as the Financial Accounting Standards Board and the SEC;
- monetary and fiscal policies of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and the U.S. Government and other governmental initiatives affecting the financial services industry;
  - adverse changes in the securities markets;
- our ability to manage loan delinquency and charge off rates and changes in estimation of the adequacy of the allowance for loan losses;
- the costs and effects of litigation and of unexpected or adverse outcomes in such litigation, including settlements and judgments; and

- our success at managing the risks involved in the foregoing.

Such forward-looking statements are meaningful only on the date when such statements are made, and we undertake no obligation to update any forward-looking statement to reflect events or circumstances after the date on which such a statement is made to reflect the occurrence of unanticipated events.

## FIRST FINANCIAL BANCORP.

We are a Cincinnati, Ohio based bank holding company with \$3.5 billion in assets. Our banking subsidiary, First Financial Bank, N.A., founded in 1863, provides retail and commercial banking products and services, and investment and insurance products through its 80 retail banking locations in Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana. The bank's wealth management division, First Financial Wealth Resource Group, provides investment management, traditional trust, brokerage, private banking, and insurance services, and has approximately \$1.92 billion in assets under management.

Our principal executive offices are located at 4000 Smith Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45209 and our telephone number at that address is (513) 979-5837. We maintain an Internet website at [www.bankatfirst.com](http://www.bankatfirst.com). We are not incorporating the information on our website into this prospectus, and neither this website nor the information on this website is included or incorporated in, or is a part of, this prospectus.

## RISK FACTORS

An investment in our securities involves significant risks. You should carefully consider the risks described under "Risk Factors" in our most recent Annual Report on Form 10-K, and in our updates to those Risk Factors in our Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q, together with all of the other information appearing in this prospectus or incorporated by reference into this prospectus, in light of your particular investment objectives and financial circumstances. In addition to those risk factors, there may be additional risks and uncertainties of which management is not aware or focused on or that management deems immaterial. Our business, financial condition or results of operations could be materially adversely affected by any of these risks. The trading price of our securities could decline due to any of these risks, and you may lose all or part of your investment.

## USE OF PROCEEDS

All of the securities offered pursuant to this prospectus are being offered by the selling securityholders listed under "Selling Securityholders." We will not receive any proceeds from any sale of the securities by the selling securityholders.

## RATIOS OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES AND PREFERRED DIVIDENDS

Our consolidated ratio of earnings to fixed charges for each of the periods indicated is as follows:

	Nine Months Ended			Years Ended December 31,			
	September 30, 2008	2007	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges :							
Excluding interest on deposits	6.01x	6.62x	7.13x	3.94x	3.75x	4.10x	4.07x
Including interest on deposits	1.59x	1.57x	1.61x	1.38x	1.77x	2.07x	1.90x

Prior to December 23, 2008, we had no shares of preferred stock outstanding. Consequently, the ratios of earnings to fixed charges and preferred dividends are the same as the ratios of earnings to fixed charges for the same periods listed above. For the purpose of computing the ratios of earnings to fixed charges, earnings consist of consolidated income from continuing operations before income tax expense and fixed charges. Fixed charges exclude interest on uncertain tax positions which is classified with income tax expense in the consolidated financial statements.

## DESCRIPTION OF SERIES A PREFERRED STOCK

The following is a brief description of the terms of the Series A preferred stock that may be resold by the selling securityholders. This summary does not purport to be complete in all respects. This description is subject to and qualified in its entirety by reference to our amended and restated articles of incorporation, as amended (the “Articles of Incorporation”), including the Certificate of Amendment to the Articles of Incorporation with respect to the Series A preferred stock that have been filed with the SEC and are also available upon request from us.

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## General

Under our Articles of Incorporation, we have authority to issue up to 80,000 shares of preferred stock, without par value per share, designated as Fixed Rate Cumulative Perpetual Preferred Stock, Series A. All of said shares of Series A preferred stock were issued to the initial selling security holder in a transaction exempt from the registration requirements of the Securities Act. The issued and outstanding shares of Series A preferred stock are validly issued, fully paid, and non assessable.

### Dividends Payable On Shares of Series A Preferred Stock

Holders of shares of Series A preferred stock are entitled to receive if, as and when declared by our board of directors, out of legally available funds, cumulative cash dividends at a rate per annum of 5% per share on a liquidation preference of \$1,000 per share of Series A preferred stock with respect to each dividend period from December 23, 2008 to, but excluding, February 15, 2014. From and after February 15, 2014, holders of shares of Series A preferred stock are entitled to receive cumulative cash dividends at a rate per annum of 9% per share on a liquidation preference of \$1,000 per share of Series A preferred stock with respect to each dividend period thereafter.

Dividends are payable quarterly in arrears on each February 15, May 15, August 15 and November 15 (each a “dividend payment date”), starting with February 15, 2009. If any dividend payment date is not a business day, then the next business day will be the applicable dividend payment date, and no additional dividends will accrue as a result of the applicable postponement of the dividend payment date. Dividends payable during any dividend period are computed on the basis of a 360-day year consisting of twelve 30-day months. Dividends payable with respect to Series A preferred stock are payable to holders of record of shares of Series A preferred stock on the date that is 15 calendar days immediately preceding the applicable dividend payment date or such other record date as the board of directors or any duly authorized committee of the board determines, so long as such record date is not more than 60 nor less than 10 days prior to the applicable dividend payment date.

If we determine not to pay any dividend or a full dividend with respect to the Series A preferred stock, we are required to provide written notice to the holders of shares of Series A preferred stock prior to the applicable dividend payment date.

We are subject to various regulatory policies and requirements relating to the payment of dividends, including requirements to maintain adequate capital above regulatory minimums. The Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System (the “Federal Reserve Board”) is authorized to determine, under certain circumstances relating to the financial condition of a bank holding company, such as us, that the payment of dividends would be an unsafe or unsound practice and to prohibit payment thereof.

### Priority of Dividends

With respect to the payment of dividends and the amounts to be paid upon liquidation, the Series A preferred stock will rank:

- senior to our common stock and all other equity securities designated as ranking junior to the Series A preferred stock; and
- at least equally with all other equity securities designated as ranking on a parity with the Series A preferred stock (“parity stock”), with respect to the payment of dividends and distribution of assets upon our liquidation, dissolution or winding-up.

So long as any shares of Series A preferred stock remain outstanding, unless all accrued and unpaid dividends for all prior dividend periods have been paid or are contemporaneously declared and paid in full, no dividend whatsoever shall be paid or declared on our common stock or any other shares of junior stock or parity stock, other than a dividend payable solely in common stock.

In addition, we may not purchase, redeem or otherwise acquire for consideration any shares of our common stock or other junior stock unless we have paid in full all accrued dividends on the Series A preferred stock for all prior dividend periods, other than:

- purchases, redemptions or other acquisitions of our common stock or other junior stock in connection with the administration of our employee benefit plans in the ordinary course of business;
- purchases or other acquisitions by broker-dealer subsidiaries of FFBC solely for the purpose of market-making, stabilization or customer facilitation transactions in junior stock or parity stock in the ordinary course of its business;
- purchases or other acquisitions by broker-dealer subsidiaries of FFBC for resale pursuant to an offering by us of our stock that is underwritten by the related broker-dealer subsidiary;
  - redemption or repurchases of rights pursuant to any shareholders' rights plan;
- acquisition by us of record ownership of junior stock or parity stock for the beneficial ownership of any other person (other than us), including as trustees or custodians; and
- the exchange or conversion of junior stock for or into other junior stock or of parity stock for or into other parity stock or junior stock, but only to the extent that such acquisition is required pursuant to binding contractual agreements entered into before December 23, 2008 or any subsequent agreement for the accelerated exercise, settlement or exchange thereof for common stock.

If we repurchase shares of Series A preferred stock from a holder other than the initial selling securityholder, we must offer to repurchase a ratable portion of Series A preferred stock then held by the initial selling securityholder.

On any dividend payment date for which full dividends are not paid, or declared and funds set aside therefor, on the Series A preferred stock and any other parity stock, all dividends paid or declared for payment on that dividend payment date (or, with respect to parity stock with a different dividend payment date, on the applicable dividend date therefor falling within the dividend period and related to the dividend payment date for the Series A preferred stock), with respect to the Series A preferred stock and any other parity stock shall be declared ratably among the holders of any such shares who have the right to receive dividends, in proportion to the respective amounts of the undeclared and unpaid dividends relating to the dividend period.

Subject to the foregoing, such dividends (payable in cash, stock or otherwise) as may be determined by our board of directors may be declared and paid on our common stock and any other stock ranking equally with or junior to the Series A preferred stock from time to time out of any funds legally available for such payment, and the Series A preferred stock shall not be entitled to participate in any such dividend.

#### Redemption

The Series A preferred stock may not be redeemed prior to February 15, 2012 unless we have received aggregate gross proceeds from one or more qualified equity offerings (as described below) equal to \$20 million, which equals 25% of the aggregate liquidation amount of the Series A preferred stock on the date of issuance. In such a case, we may redeem the Series A preferred stock, subject to the approval of Federal Reserve Board, in whole or in part, upon notice as described below, up to a maximum amount equal to the aggregate net cash proceeds received by us from such qualified equity offerings. A "qualified equity offering" is a sale and issuance for cash by us, to persons other than FFBC or its subsidiaries after December 23, 2008, of shares of perpetual preferred stock, common stock or a combination thereof, that in each case qualify as tier 1 capital of FFBC at the time of issuance under the applicable



risk-based capital guidelines of the Federal Reserve Board. Qualified equity offerings do not include issuances made in connection with acquisitions, issuances of trust preferred securities and issuances of common stock and/or perpetual preferred stock made pursuant to agreements or arrangements entered into, or pursuant to financing plans that were publicly announced, on or prior to October 13, 2008.

After February 15, 2012, the Series A preferred stock may be redeemed at any time, subject to the approval of the Federal Reserve Board, in whole or in part, subject to notice as described below.

In any redemption, the redemption price shall be an amount equal to the per share liquidation amount plus accrued and unpaid dividends to but excluding the date of redemption.

The Series A preferred stock will not be subject to any mandatory redemption, sinking fund or similar provisions. Holders of shares of Series A preferred stock have no right to require the redemption or repurchase of the Series A preferred stock.

In case of any redemption of less than all of the shares of the Series A preferred stock, the shares to be redeemed will be selected either pro rata or in such other manner as our board of directors may determine to be fair and equitable.

We will mail notice of any redemption of the Series A preferred stock by first class mail, postage prepaid, addressed to the holders of record of the shares of the Series A preferred stock to be redeemed at their respective last addresses appearing on our books. This mailing will be at least 30 days and not more than 60 days before the date fixed for redemption. Any notice mailed or otherwise given as described in this paragraph will be conclusively presumed to have been duly given, whether or not the holder receives the notice, and failure duly to give the notice by mail or otherwise, or any defect in the notice or in the mailing or provision of the notice, to any holder of the Series A preferred stock designated for redemption will not affect the redemption of any other shares of Series A preferred stock. Each notice of redemption will set forth the applicable redemption date, the redemption price, the place where shares of Series A preferred stock are to be redeemed, and the number of shares of Series A preferred stock to be redeemed (and, if less than all shares of Series A preferred stock held by the applicable holder, the number of shares to be redeemed from the holder).

Shares of Series A preferred stock that are redeemed, repurchased or otherwise acquired by us will revert to authorized but unissued shares of our preferred stock.

#### Liquidation Rights

In the event that we voluntarily or involuntarily liquidate, dissolve or wind up our affairs, holders of Series A preferred stock will be entitled to receive an amount per share, referred to as the total liquidation amount, equal to the fixed liquidation preference of \$1,000 per share, plus any accrued and unpaid dividends, whether or not declared, to the date of payment. Holders of Series A preferred stock will be entitled to receive the total liquidation amount out of our assets that are available for distribution to shareholders, after payment or provision for payment of our debts and other liabilities but before any distribution of assets is made to holders of our common stock or any other shares ranking, as to that distribution, junior to the Series A preferred stock.

If our assets are not sufficient to pay the total liquidation amount in full to all holders of Series A preferred stock and all holders of any shares of outstanding parity stock, the amounts paid to the holders of Series A preferred stock and other shares of parity stock will be paid pro rata in accordance with the respective total liquidation amount for those holders. If the total liquidation amount per share of Series A preferred stock has been paid in full to all holders of Series A preferred stock and other shares of parity stock, the holders of our common stock or any other shares ranking, as to such distribution, junior to the Series A preferred stock will be entitled to receive all of our remaining assets according to their respective rights and preferences.

For purposes of the liquidation rights, neither the sale, conveyance, exchange or transfer of all or substantially all of our property and assets, nor the consolidation or merger by us with or into, any other corporation or by another corporation with or into us, will constitute a liquidation, dissolution or winding-up of our affairs.

Voting Rights

Except as indicated below or otherwise required by law, the holders of Series A preferred stock will not have any voting rights.

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Election of Two Directors upon Non-Payment of Dividends. If the dividends on the Series A preferred stock have not been paid for an aggregate of six quarterly dividend periods or more (whether or not consecutive), the authorized number of directors then constituting our board of directors will be automatically increased by two. Holders of Series A preferred stock, together with the holders of any outstanding parity stock with like voting rights (the "Voting Parity Stock"), voting as a single class, will be entitled to elect the two additional members of our board of directors (the "Preferred Stock Directors"), at the next annual meeting (or at a special meeting called for the purpose of electing the Preferred Stock Directors prior to the next annual meeting) and at each subsequent annual meeting until all accrued and unpaid dividends for all past dividend periods have been paid in full. The election of any Preferred Stock Director is subject to the qualification that the election would not cause us to violate the corporate governance requirement of the Nasdaq Stock Market (or any other exchange on which our securities may be listed) that listed companies must have a majority of independent directors.

Upon the termination of the right of the holders of Series A preferred stock and Voting Parity Stock to vote for Preferred Stock Directors, as described above, the Preferred Stock Directors will immediately cease to be qualified as directors, their term of office shall terminate immediately and the number of authorized directors of FFBC will be reduced by the number of Preferred Stock Directors that the holders of Series A preferred stock and Voting Parity Stock had been entitled to elect. The holders of a majority of shares of Series A preferred stock and Voting Parity Stock, voting as a class, may remove any Preferred Stock Director, with or without cause, and the holders of a majority of the shares of Series A preferred stock and Voting Parity Stock, voting as a class, may fill any vacancy created by the removal of a Preferred Stock Director. If the office of a Preferred Stock Director becomes vacant for any other reason, the remaining Preferred Stock Director may choose a successor to fill such vacancy for the remainder of the unexpired term.

Other Voting Rights. So long as any shares of Series A preferred stock are outstanding, in addition to any other vote or consent of shareholders required by law or by our Articles of Incorporation, as amended, the vote or consent of the holders of at least 66 2/3% of the shares of Series A preferred stock at the time outstanding, voting separately as a single class, given in person or by proxy, either in writing without a meeting or by vote at any meeting called for the purpose, shall be necessary for effecting or validating:

- any amendment or alternation of our Articles of Incorporation to authorize or create or increase the authorized amount of, or any issuance of, any shares of, or any securities convertible into or exchangeable or exercisable for shares of, any class or series of capital stock ranking senior to the Series A preferred stock with respect to payment of dividends and/or distribution of assets on our liquidation, dissolution or winding up;
- any amendment, alternation or repeal of any provision of the Articles of Incorporation for the Series A preferred stock so as to adversely affect the rights, preferences, privileges or voting powers of the Series A preferred stock; or
- any consummation of a binding share exchange or reclassification involving the Series A preferred stock or a merger or consolidation of FFBC with another entity, unless the shares of Series A preferred stock remain outstanding following any such transaction or, if FFBC is not the surviving entity, are converted into or exchanged for preference securities and such remaining outstanding shares of Series A preferred stock or preference securities have rights, references, privileges and voting powers that are not materially less favorable than the rights, preferences, privileges or voting powers of the Series A preferred stock, taken as a whole.

To the extent of the voting rights of the Series A preferred stock, each holder of Series A preferred stock will have one vote for each \$1,000 of liquidation preference to which such holder's shares of Series A preferred stock are entitled.

The foregoing voting provisions will not apply if, at or prior to the time when the vote or consent would otherwise be required, all outstanding shares of Series A preferred stock have been redeemed or called for redemption upon proper notice and sufficient funds have been set aside by us for the benefit of the holders of Series A preferred stock to effect

the redemption.

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## DESCRIPTION OF WARRANT TO PURCHASE COMMON STOCK

The following is a brief description of the terms of the Warrant that may be resold by the selling securityholders. This summary does not purport to be complete in all respects. This description is subject to and qualified in its entirety by reference to the Warrant, a copy of which has been filed with the SEC, and are also available upon request from us.

### Shares of Common Stock Subject to the Warrant

The Warrant is initially exercisable for up to 930,233 shares of our common stock. If we complete one or more qualified equity offerings on or prior to December 31, 2009 that result in our receipt of aggregate gross proceeds of not less than \$80 million, which is equal to 100% of the aggregate liquidation preference of the Series A preferred stock, the number of shares of common stock underlying the Warrant then held by the selling securityholders will be reduced by one half of the original number of shares. The number of shares subject to the Warrant are subject to the further adjustments described below under the heading "Adjustments to the Warrant."

### Exercise of the Warrant

The initial exercise price applicable to the Warrant is \$12.90 per share of common stock for which the Warrant may be exercised. The Warrant may be exercised at any time on or before December 23, 2018 by surrender of the Warrant and a completed notice of exercise attached as an annex to the Warrant and the payment of the exercise price for the shares of common stock for which the Warrant is being exercised. The exercise price may be paid either by the withholding by us of such number of shares of common stock issuable upon exercise of the Warrant equal to the value of the aggregate exercise price of the Warrant determined by reference to the market price of our common stock on the trading day on which the Warrant is exercised or, if agreed to by us and the warrant holder, by the payment of cash equal to the aggregate exercise price. The exercise price applicable to the Warrant is subject to the further adjustments described below under the heading "Adjustments to the Warrant."

Upon exercise of the Warrant, certificates for the shares of common stock issuable upon exercise will be issued to the warrant holder. We will not issue fractional shares upon any exercise of the Warrant. Instead, the warrant holder will be entitled to a cash payment equal to the market price of our common stock on the last day preceding the exercise of the Warrant (less the pro-rated exercise price of the Warrant) for any fractional shares that would have otherwise been issuable upon exercise of the Warrant. We will at all times reserve the aggregate number of shares of our common stock for which the Warrant may be exercised.

### Rights as a Shareholder

The warrant holders shall have no rights or privileges of the holders of our common stock, including any voting rights, until (and then only to the extent) the Warrant has been exercised. The initial selling securityholder has agreed not to exercise any voting rights with respect to common stock issued upon exercise of the Warrant.

### Transferability

The initial selling securityholder may not transfer any portion of the Warrant with respect to more than one half of the initial Warrant shares until the earlier of the date on which we have received aggregate gross proceeds from a qualified equity offering of at least \$80 million and December 31, 2009. The Warrant, and all rights under the Warrant, are otherwise transferable.

### Adjustments to the Warrant

The number of shares of our common stock issuable upon exercise of the Warrant (“Warrant Shares”) and exercise price will be adjusted upon occurrence of certain events as follows:

Adjustments in Connection with Stock Splits, Subdivisions, Reclassifications and Combinations. The number of Warrant Shares will be proportionately adjusted and the exercise price will be adjusted so that the aggregate exercise price will remain the same after the number of Warrant Shares is adjusted.

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Anti-dilution Adjustment. Until the earlier of December 23, 2011 and the date the initial selling securityholder no longer holds the Warrant (and other than in certain permitted transactions described below), if we issue any shares of common stock (or securities convertible or exercisable into common stock) for less than 90% of the market price of the common stock on the last trading day prior to pricing such shares, then the number of shares of common stock into which the Warrant is exercisable and the exercise price will be adjusted. Permitted transactions include issuances:

- as consideration for or to fund the acquisition of businesses and/or related assets;
- in connection with employee benefit plans and compensation related arrangements in the ordinary course and consistent with past practice approved by our board of directors;
- in connection with public or broadly marketed offerings and sales of common stock or convertible securities for cash conducted by us or our affiliates pursuant to registration under the Securities Act, or Rule 144A thereunder on a basis consistent with capital-raising transactions by comparable financial institutions (but do not include other private transactions); and
- in connection with the exercise of preemptive rights on terms existing as of December 23, 2008.

Other Distributions. If we declare any dividends or distributions other than our historical, ordinary cash dividends, the exercise price of the Warrant will be adjusted to reflect such distribution.

Certain Repurchases. If we effect a pro rata repurchase of common stock both the number of shares issuable upon exercise of the Warrant and the exercise price will be adjusted.

Business Combinations. In the event of a merger, consolidation or similar transaction involving FFBC and requiring shareholder approval, the warrant holder's right to receive shares of our common stock upon exercise of the Warrant shall be converted into the right to exercise the Warrant for the consideration that would have been payable to the warrant holder with respect to the shares of common stock for which the Warrant may be exercised, as if the Warrant had been exercised prior to such merger, consolidation or similar transaction.

## DESCRIPTION OF COMMON STOCK

The following is a brief description of our common shares, which we also refer to in this prospectus as common stock. This summary does not purport to be complete in all respects. This description is subject to and qualified in its entirety by reference to applicable provisions of the Ohio General Corporation Law, as amended (the "OGCL"), and to our Articles of Incorporation, and our amended and restated regulations, as amended (the "Regulations"), copies of which have been filed with the SEC and are also available upon request from us, as well as the description of our common stock which is incorporated by reference herein through our previous filings with the SEC.

### General

We may issue up to 160,000,000 common shares, without par value per share, of which 37,481,201 shares were outstanding as of January 20, 2009.

Holders of our common stock are entitled to receive dividends if, as and when declared by our board of directors out of any funds legally available for dividends. Holders of our common stock are also entitled, upon our liquidation, and after claims of creditors and the preferences of the Series A preferred stock, and any other class or series of preferred stock outstanding at the time of liquidation, to receive pro rata our net assets. We pay dividends on our common stock only if we have paid or provided for all dividends on our outstanding series of preferred stock, for the then current period and, in the case of any cumulative preferred stock (including the Series A preferred stock), all prior periods.



Our Series A preferred stock has, and any other series of preferred stock upon issuance will have, preference over our common stock with respect to the payment of dividends and the distribution of assets in the event of our liquidation or dissolution. Our preferred stock also has such other preferences as currently, or as may be, fixed by our board of directors.

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Holders of our common stock are entitled to one vote for each share that they hold and are vested with all of the voting power except as our board of directors has provided, or may provide in the future, with respect to preferred stock or any other class or series of preferred stock that the board of directors may hereafter authorize. Shares of our common stock are not redeemable, and have no subscription, conversion or preemptive rights.

Our common stock is listed on the Nasdaq Global Select Market under the symbol “FFBC.” Outstanding shares of our common stock are validly issued, fully paid and non-assessable. Holders of our common stock are not, and will not be, subject to any liability as shareholders.

#### Transfer Agent and Registrar

The transfer agent and registrar for our common stock is Registrar and Transfer Company.

#### Restrictions on Ownership

The Bank Holding Company Act requires any “bank holding company,” as defined in the Bank Holding Company Act, to obtain the approval of the Federal Reserve Board prior to the acquisition of 5% or more of our common stock. Any person, other than a bank holding company, is required to obtain prior approval of the Federal Reserve Board to acquire 10% or more of our common stock under the Change in Bank Control Act. Any holder of 25% or more of our common stock, or a holder of 5% or more if such holder otherwise exercises a “controlling influence” over us, is subject to regulation as a bank holding company under the Bank Holding Company Act.

### ANTI-TAKEOVER EFFECTS OF CERTAIN ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION PROVISIONS

Our Articles of Incorporation contain certain provisions that make it more difficult to acquire control of us by means of a tender offer, open market purchase, a proxy fight or otherwise. These provisions are designed to encourage persons seeking to acquire control of us to negotiate with our directors. We believe that, as a general rule, the interests of our shareholders would be best served if any change in control results from negotiations with our directors.

#### Classification of Board of Directors

Our Articles of Incorporation provide for a classified board, to which approximately one-third of our board of directors is elected each year at our annual meeting of shareholders. Accordingly, our directors serve three-year terms rather than one-year terms. The classification of our board of directors has the effect of making it more difficult for shareholders to change the composition of our board of directors. At least two annual meetings of shareholders, instead of one, will generally be required to effect a change in a majority of our board of directors. Such a delay may help ensure that our directors, if confronted by a holder attempting to force a proxy contest, a tender or exchange offer, or an extraordinary corporate transaction, would have sufficient time to review the proposal as well as any available alternatives to the proposal and to act in what they believe to be the best interests of our shareholders. The classification provisions apply to every election of directors, however, regardless of whether a change in the composition of our board of directors would be beneficial to us and our shareholders and whether or not a majority of our shareholders believe that such a change would be desirable.

The classification of our board of directors could also have the effect of discouraging a third party from initiating a proxy contest, making a tender offer or otherwise attempting to obtain control of us, even though such an attempt might be beneficial to us and our shareholders. The classification of our board of directors could thus increase the likelihood that incumbent directors will retain their positions. In addition, because the classification of our board of directors may discourage accumulations of large blocks of our shares by purchasers whose objective is to take control of us and remove a majority of our board of directors, the classification of our board of directors could tend to reduce the likelihood of fluctuations in the market price of our common stock that might result from accumulations of large

blocks of our common stock for such a purpose. Accordingly, our shareholders could be deprived of certain opportunities to sell their shares at a higher market price than might otherwise be the case.

We believe that the power of our board of directors to issue additional authorized but unissued shares of common stock of ours without further action by our shareholders, unless required by applicable law or the rules of any stock exchange or automated quotation system on which our securities may be listed or traded, will provide us with increased flexibility in structuring possible future financings and acquisitions and in meeting other needs that might arise. Our board of directors could authorize and issue a class or series of shares that could, depending upon the terms of such class or series, delay, defer or prevent a transaction or a change in control of us that might involve a premium price for holders of our common stock or that our shareholders otherwise consider to be in their best interest.

### Other Limitations on Change in Control

In addition to the classification of the board of directors as discussed above, the following provisions of the Articles of Incorporation and Ohio law might have the effect of delaying, deferring or preventing a change in control of us and would operate only with respect to an extraordinary corporate transaction, such as a merger, reorganization, tender offer, sale or transfer of assets or liquidation involving FFBC and certain persons described below.

The OGCL provides that the approval of two-thirds of the voting power of a corporation is required to effect mergers and similar transactions, to adopt amendments to the articles of incorporation of a corporation and to take certain other significant actions. Although under Ohio law the articles of incorporation of a corporation may permit such actions to be taken by a vote that is less than two-thirds (but not less than a majority), the Articles of Incorporation do not contain such a provision. The two-thirds voting requirement tends to make approval of such matters, including further amendments to the Articles, relatively difficult, and a vote of the holders of in excess of one-third of our outstanding shares of common stock would be sufficient to prevent implementation of any of the corporate actions mentioned above.

Ohio, the state of our incorporation, has enacted OGCL Section 1701.831, a “control share acquisition” statute. The control share acquisition statute basically provides that any person acquiring shares of an “issuing public corporation” (which definition we meet) in any of the following three ownership ranges must seek and obtain shareholder approval of the acquisition transaction that first puts such ownership within each such range: (i) more than 20% but less than 33 1/3%; (ii) 33 1/3% but not more than 50%; and (iii) more than 50%.

The control share acquisition statute applies not only to traditional offers but also to open market purchases, privately negotiated transactions and original issuances by an Ohio corporation, whether friendly or unfriendly. The procedural requirements of the control share acquisition statute could render approval of any control share acquisition difficult in that the transaction must be authorized at a special meeting of shareholders, at which a quorum is present, by the affirmative vote of the majority of the voting power represented and by a majority of the portion of such voting power excluding interested shares. Any corporate defense against persons seeking to acquire control may have the effect of discouraging or preventing offers which some shareholders might find financially attractive. On the other hand, the need on the part of the acquiring person to convince our shareholders of the value and validity of the offer may cause such offer to be more financially attractive in order to gain shareholder approval.

Ohio has also enacted Chapter 1704, a “merger moratorium” statute. The merger moratorium statute provides that, unless a corporation’s articles of incorporation or regulations otherwise provide, an “issuing public corporation” (which definition we meet) may not engage in a “Chapter 1704 transaction” for three years following the date on which a person acquires more than 10% of the voting power in the election of directors of the issuing corporation, unless the Chapter 1704 transaction is approved by the corporation’s board of directors prior to such voting power acquisition. A person who acquires such voting power is an “interested shareholder”, and “Chapter 1704 transactions” involve a broad range of transactions, including mergers, consolidations, combinations, liquidations, recapitalizations and other transactions between an issuing public corporation and an interested shareholder if such transactions involve 5% of the assets or shares of the issuing public corporation or 10% of its earning power. After the initial three year moratorium, Chapter 1704 prohibits such transactions absent approval by disinterested shareholders or the transaction meeting certain statutorily defined fair price provisions. One significant effect of Chapter 1704 is to encourage a person to negotiate with the board of directors of a corporation prior to becoming an interested shareholder.

Ohio also has enacted Ohio Revised Code Section 1707.043, which provides that a person who announces a control bid must disgorge profits realized by that person upon the sale of any equity securities within 18 months of the announcement.

In addition, Section 1701.59 of the OGCL provides that, in determining what a director reasonably believes to be in the best interests of the corporation, such director may consider, in addition to the interests of the corporation's shareholders, any of the interests of the corporation's employees, suppliers, creditors and customers, the economy of the State of Ohio and the United States, community and societal considerations and the long-term as well as the short-term interests in the corporation and its shareholders, including the possibility that these interests may be best served by the continued independence of the corporation.

The overall effect of these statutes may be to render more difficult or discourage the removal of incumbent management or the assumption of effective control by other persons.

#### PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

The selling securityholders and their successors, including their transferees, may sell the securities directly to purchasers or through underwriters, broker-dealers or agents, who may receive compensation in the form of discounts, concessions or commissions from the selling securityholders or the purchasers of the securities. These discounts, concessions or commissions as to any particular underwriter, broker-dealer or agent may be in excess of those customary in the types of transactions involved.

The securities may be sold in one or more transactions at fixed prices, at prevailing market prices at the time of sale, at varying prices determined at the time of sale or at negotiated prices. These sales may be effected in transactions, which may involve crosses or block transactions:

- on any national securities exchange or quotation service on which the Series A preferred stock or the common stock may be listed or quoted at the time of sale, including, as of the date of this prospectus, the Nasdaq Global Select Market in the case of the common stock;
- in the over-the-counter market;
- in transactions otherwise than on these exchanges or services or in the over-the-counter market; or
- through the writing of options, whether the options are listed on an options exchange or otherwise.

In addition, any securities that qualify for sale pursuant to Rule 144 under the Securities Act may be sold under Rule 144 rather than pursuant to this prospectus.

In connection with the sale of the securities or otherwise, the selling securityholders may enter into hedging transactions with broker-dealers, which may in turn engage in short sales of the common stock issuable upon exercise of the warrant in the course of hedging the positions they assume. The selling securityholders may also sell short the common stock issuable upon exercise of the warrant and deliver common stock to close out short positions, or loan or pledge the the Series A preferred stock or the common stock issuable upon exercise of the Warrant to broker-dealers that in turn may sell these securities.

The aggregate proceeds to the selling securityholders from the sale of the securities will be the purchase price of the securities less discounts and commissions, if any.



In effecting sales, broker-dealers or agents engaged by the selling securityholders may arrange for other broker-dealers to participate. Broker-dealers or agents may receive commissions, discounts or concessions from the selling securityholders in amounts to be negotiated immediately prior to the sale.

In offering the securities covered by this prospectus, the selling securityholders and any broker-dealers who execute sales for the selling securityholders may be deemed to be “underwriters” within the meaning of Section 2(a)(11) of the Securities Act in connection with such sales. Any profits realized by the selling securityholders and the compensation of any broker-dealer may be deemed to be underwriting discounts and commissions. Selling securityholders who are “underwriters” within the meaning of Section 2(a)(11) of the Securities Act will be subject to the prospectus delivery requirements of the Securities Act and may be subject to certain statutory and regulatory liabilities, including liabilities imposed pursuant to Sections 11, 12 and 17 of the Securities Act and Rule 10b-5 under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the “Exchange Act”).

In order to comply with the securities laws of certain states, if applicable, the securities must be sold in such jurisdictions only through registered or licensed brokers or dealers. In addition, in certain states the securities may not be sold unless they have been registered or qualified for sale in the applicable state or an exemption from the registration or qualification requirement is available and is complied with.

The anti-manipulation rules of Regulation M under the Exchange Act may apply to sales of securities pursuant to this prospectus and to the activities of the selling securityholders. In addition, we will make copies of this prospectus available to the selling securityholders for the purpose of satisfying the prospectus delivery requirements of the Securities Act, which may include delivery through the facilities of the Nasdaq Global Select Market pursuant to Rule 153 under the Securities Act.

At the time a particular offer of securities is made, if required, a prospectus supplement will set forth the number and type of securities being offered and the terms of the offering, including the name of any underwriter, dealer or agent, the purchase price paid by any underwriter, any discount, commission and other item constituting compensation, any discount, commission or concession allowed or reallocated or paid to any dealer, and the proposed selling price to the public.

We do not intend to apply for listing of the Series A preferred stock on any securities exchange or for inclusion of the Series A preferred stock in any automated quotation system unless requested by the initial selling shareholder. No assurance can be given as to the liquidity of the trading market, if any, for the Series A preferred stock.

We have agreed to indemnify the selling securityholders against certain liabilities, including certain liabilities under the Securities Act. We have also agreed, among other things, to bear substantially all expenses (other than underwriting discounts and selling commissions) in connection with the registration and sale of the securities covered by this prospectus.

#### SELLING SECURITYHOLDERS

On December 23, 2008, we issued the Warrant and the shares of Series A preferred stock covered by this prospectus to the United States Department of the Treasury, which is the initial selling securityholder under this prospectus, in a transaction exempt from the registration requirements of the Securities Act and state securities laws. The initial selling securityholder, or its successors, including transferees, may from time to time offer and sell, pursuant to this prospectus or a supplement to this prospectus, any or all of the securities they own. The securities to be offered under this prospectus for the account of the selling securityholders are:

- 80,000 shares of Fixed Rate Cumulative Perpetual Preferred Stock, Series A, representing beneficial ownership of 100% of the shares of Series A preferred stock outstanding on the date of this prospectus;

- a warrant to purchase up to 930,233 shares of our common stock, representing beneficial ownership of approximately 2.48% of our common stock as of January 20, 2009; and
- 930,233 shares of common stock issuable upon exercise of the Warrant, which shares, if issued, would represent ownership of approximately 2.48% of our common stock as of January 20, 2009.



For purposes of this prospectus, we have assumed that, after completion of the offering, none of the securities covered by this prospectus will be held by the selling securityholders.

Beneficial ownership is determined in accordance with the rules of the SEC and includes voting or investment power with respect to the securities. To our knowledge, the initial selling securityholder has sole voting and investment power with respect to the securities, subject to restrictions on exercise of voting rights on the Series A preferred stock and common stock issuable upon exercise of the Warrant as described in “Description of Series A Preferred Stock” and “Description of Warrant to Purchase Common Stock” above, respectively.

We do not know when or in what amounts the selling securityholders may offer the securities for sale. The selling securityholders might not sell any or all of the securities offered by this prospectus. Because the selling securityholders may offer all, some, or none of the securities pursuant to this offering, we cannot estimate the number of the securities that will be held by the selling securityholders after completion of the offering.

Other than with respect to the acquisition of the securities, the initial selling securityholder has not had a material relationship with us.

Information about the selling securityholders may change over time and changed information will be set forth in supplements to this prospectus if and when necessary.

#### VALIDITY OF SECURITIES

The validity of the Series A preferred stock, the Warrant and our common stock being offered hereby will be passed upon for us by Squire, Sanders & Dempsey L.L.P.

#### EXPERTS

Ernst & Young LLP, independent registered public accounting firm, has audited our consolidated financial statements included in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2007, and the effectiveness of our internal control over financial reporting as of December 31, 2007, as set forth in their reports, which are incorporated by reference in this prospectus and elsewhere in the registration statement. Our financial statements are incorporated by reference in reliance on Ernst & Young LLP’s reports, given on their authority as experts in accounting and auditing.

## PART II

## INFORMATION NOT REQUIRED IN PROSPECTUS

## Item 14. Other Expenses of Issuance and Distribution

The estimated expenses (other than the SEC registration fee) in connection with the distribution of the securities being registered, all of which are to be paid by us, are as follows:

SEC registration fee	\$	3,616
Legal fees and expenses		20,000
Accounting fees and expenses		5,000
Miscellaneous fees and expenses		5,000
Total expenses	\$	33,616

## Item 15. Indemnification of Directors and Officers

The OGCL allows a corporation under certain circumstances to indemnify its directors, officers, employees and agents. Generally, whether by the Articles or the Regulations or by statute, the indemnification provisions in the OGCL permit FFBC to pay expenses, including attorney's fees, judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement, actually and reasonably incurred in the defense of any pending or threatened suit. To the extent that a director, officer, employee or agent has been successful on the merits or otherwise in defense of certain actions, suits or proceedings, the statute requires FFBC to pay expenses, including attorney's fees, actually and reasonably incurred by such director, officer, employee or agent in connection with the action, suit or proceeding.

With respect to permissive indemnification, the determination of the right of indemnification is made by a quorum of disinterested directors not involved in such a pending matter and, if they are unable to make such determination, then such determination is made by independent legal counsel, our shareholders or by the Hamilton County, Ohio, Court of Common Pleas. The statute does not allow indemnification of an officer or director where such person has been adjudicated negligent or guilty of misconduct. Additionally, such officer or director must have acted in good faith or had no reason to believe such officer's or director's conduct was unlawful to be indemnified.

The statute provides that indemnification pursuant to its provisions is not exclusive of other rights of indemnification to which a person may be entitled under a corporation's articles of incorporation, regulations, any agreement, a vote of shareholders or disinterested directors or otherwise.

The foregoing discussion is necessarily subject to the complete text of Section 1701.13(E) of the OGCL, which provides for indemnification of directors, officers and other parties in certain circumstances, and is qualified in its entirety by reference thereto.

In general, the Articles of Incorporation and the Regulations provide that we shall indemnify all persons whom it may indemnify to the full extent permitted by Ohio law.

## Item 16. Exhibits

The exhibits filed (unless otherwise noted) as a part of this Registration Statement are set forth in the accompanying Exhibit Index.

## Item 17. Undertakings

The undersigned Registrant hereby undertakes:

(1) To file, during any period in which offers or sales are being made, a post-effective amendment to this registration statement:

(i) to include any prospectus required by Section 10(a)(3) of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended;

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(ii) to reflect in the prospectus any facts or events arising after the effective date of the registration statement (or the most recent post-effective amendment thereof) which, individually or in the aggregate, represent a fundamental change in the information set forth in the registration statement. Notwithstanding the foregoing, any increase or decrease in volume of securities offered (if the total dollar value of securities offered would not exceed that which was registered) and any deviation from the low or high end of the estimated maximum offering range may be reflected in the form of prospectus filed with the SEC pursuant to Rule 424(b) if, in the aggregate, the changes in volume and price represent no more than 20 percent change in the maximum aggregate offering price set forth in the "Calculation of Registration Fee" table in the effective registration statement; and

(iii) to include any material information with respect to the plan of distribution not previously disclosed in the registration statement or any material change to such information in the registration statement;

Provided, however, that paragraphs (1)(i), (1)(ii) and (1)(iii) above do not apply if the registration statement is on Form S-3 or Form F-3 and the information required to be included in a post-effective amendment by those paragraphs is contained in reports filed with or furnished to the SEC by the Registrant pursuant to Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 that are incorporated by reference in the registration statement, or is contained in a form of prospectus filed pursuant to Rule 424(b) that is part of the registration statement.

(2) That, for the purpose of determining any liability under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, each such post-effective amendment shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof.

(3) To remove from registration by means of a post-effective amendment any of the securities being registered which remain unsold at the termination of the offering.

(4) That, for the purpose of determining liability under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, to any purchaser:

(i) Each prospectus filed by the Registrant pursuant to Rule 424(b)(3) shall be deemed to be part of the registration statement as of the date the filed prospectus was deemed part of and included in the registration statement; and

(ii) Each prospectus required to be filed pursuant to Rule 424(b)(2), (b)(5), or (b)(7) as part of a registration statement in reliance on Rule 430B relating to an offering made pursuant to Rule 415(a)(1)(i), (vii), or (x) for the purpose of providing the information required by Section 10(a) of the Securities Act of 1933 shall be deemed to be part of and included in the registration statement as of the earlier of the date such form of prospectus is first used after effectiveness or the date of the first contract of sale of securities in the offering described in the prospectus. As provided in Rule 430B, for liability purposes of the issuer and any person that is at that date an underwriter, such date shall be deemed to be a new effective date of the registration statement relating to the securities in the registration statement to which the prospectus relates, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof. Provided, however, that no statement made in a registration statement or prospectus that is part of the registration statement or made in a document incorporated or deemed incorporated by reference into the registration statement or prospectus that is part of the registration statement will, as to a purchaser with a time of contract of sale prior to such effective date, supersede or modify any statement that was made in the registration statement or prospectus that was part of the registration statement or made in any such document immediately prior to such effective date.

(5) That, for the purpose of determining liability of the Registrant under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, to any purchaser in the initial distribution of the securities, the undersigned Registrant undertakes that in a primary offering of securities of the undersigned Registrant pursuant to this registration statement, regardless of the underwriting method used to sell the securities to the purchaser, if the securities are offered or sold to such purchaser by means of any of the following communications, the undersigned Registrant will be a seller to the purchaser and

will be considered to offer or sell such securities to such purchaser:

(i) Any preliminary prospectus or prospectus of the undersigned Registrant relating to the offering required to be filed pursuant to Rule 424;

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(ii) Any free writing prospectus relating to the offering prepared by or on behalf of the undersigned Registrant or used or referred to by the undersigned Registrant;

(iii) The portion of any other free writing prospectus relating to the offering containing material information about the undersigned Registrant or its securities provided by or on behalf of the undersigned Registrant; and

(iv) Any other communication that is an offer in the offering made by the undersigned Registrant to the purchaser.

(6) That, for purposes of determining any liability under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, the filing of the Registrant's annual report pursuant to Section 13(a) or Section 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, (and, where applicable, each filing of an employee benefit plan's annual report pursuant to Section 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended) that is incorporated by reference in the registration statement shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof.

Insofar as indemnification for liabilities arising under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, may be permitted to directors, officers and controlling persons of the Registrant pursuant to the provisions described in Item 15 above, or otherwise, the Registrant has been advised that in the opinion of the SEC such indemnification is against public policy as expressed in the Securities Act of 1933 and is, therefore, unenforceable. In the event that a claim for indemnification against such liabilities (other than the payment by the Registrant of expenses incurred or paid by a director, officer or controlling person of the Registrant in the successful defense of any action, suit or proceeding) is asserted by such director, officer or controlling person in connection with the securities being registered, that the Registrant will, unless in the opinion of its counsel the matter has been settled by controlling precedent, submit to a court of appropriate jurisdiction the question whether such indemnification by it is against public policy as expressed in the Securities Act of 1933 and will be governed by the final adjudication of such issue.

SIGNATURES

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, First Financial Bancorp. certifies that it has reasonable grounds to believe that it meets all of the requirements for filing on Form S-3 and has duly caused this registration statement to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereunto duly authorized in the City of Cincinnati, State of Ohio, on January 21, 2009.

FIRST FINANCIAL BANCORP.

By: /s/ Claude E. Davis  
 Name: Claude E. Davis  
 Title: President and Chief Executive Officer

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, this registration statement has been signed by the following persons in the capacities indicated on January 21, 2009.

Signature	Capacity
/s/ Claude E Davis	President, Chief Executive Officer and
Claude E. Davis	Director (Principal Executive Officer)
/s/ J. Franklin Hall	Executive Vice President and Chief Financial
J. Franklin Hall	Officer (Principal Financial Officer)
/s/ Anthony M. Stollings	Senior Vice President, Chief Accounting
Anthony M. Stollings	Officer and Controller (Principal Accounting Officer)
* Barry S. Porter	Chairman of the Board and Director
* J. Wickliffe Ach	Director
* Donald M. Cisle	Director
* Corinne R. Finnerty	Director
* Susan L. Knust	Director
* William J. Kramer	Director

\*  
Richard E. Olszewski

Director

\*  
Murph Knapke

Director

\*By: /s/ J. Franklin Hall  
J . Franklin Hall  
Attorney-In-Fact  
January 21, 2009

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Exhibit Index

Exhibit

No. Exhibit

4.1 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).

4.2 Certificate of Amendment by Shareholders to the Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation.

4.3 Certificate of Amendment by 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).

4.4 Amended and Restated Regulations, as amended as of May 1, 2007 (filed as Exhibit 3.2 to the Registrant's Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2007, and incorporated herein by reference).

4.5 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).

4.6 Warrant to Purchase Shares of Common Stock of the Registrant, dated December 23, 2008 (filed as Exhibit 4.1 to the Registrant's Current Report on Form 8-K filed on December 30, 2008, and incorporated herein by reference).

5.1 Opinion of Squire, Sanders & Dempsey L.L.P.

12.1 Computation of Ratio of Earnings to Fixed Charges.

23.1 Consent of Ernst & Young LLP.

23.2 Consent of Squire, Sanders & Dempsey L.L.P. (included in Exhibit 5.1).

24.1 Power of Attorney.