FIRST BANCORP /NC/
Form 10-K
March 15, 2013

UNITED STATES SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20549

FORM 10-K

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

For the fiscal year ended December 31, 2012

Commission File Number 0-15572

FIRST BANCORP

(Exact Name of Registrant as Specified in its Charter)

North Carolina (State of Incorporation)	56-1421916 (I.R.S. Employer Identification Number)
341 North Main Street, Troy, North Carolina (Address of Principal Executive Offices)	27371-0508 (Zip Code)
Registrant's telephone number, including area code:	(910) 576-6171

Securities Registered Pursuant to Section 12(b) of the Act:

Title of each class	Name of each exchange on which registered
Common Stock, No Par Value	The Nasdaq Global Select Market

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 of 1933. o YES ý NO

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is not required to file reports pursuant to Section 13 or Section 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934. o YES ý 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 Exchange Act 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. ý YES o NO

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant has submitted electronically and posted on its corporate Website, 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). ý YES o NO

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

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)

o Large Accelerated Filer ý Accelerated Filer o Non-Accelerated Filer o Smaller Reporting Company

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a shell company (as defined in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act). o YES ý NO

The aggregate market value of the Common Stock, no par value, held by non-affiliates of the registrant, based on the closing price of the Common Stock as of June 30, 2012 as reported by The NASDAQ Global Select Market, was approximately $134,981,359.

The number of shares of the registrant's Common Stock outstanding on February 28, 2013 was 19,671,775.

DOCUMENTS INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

Portions of the Registrant’s Proxy Statement to be filed pursuant to Regulation 14A are incorporated herein by reference into Part III.

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FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This report contains forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 and the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995, which statements are inherently subject to risks and uncertainties. Forward-looking statements are statements that include projections, predictions, expectations or beliefs about future events or results or otherwise are not statements of historical fact. Further, forward-looking statements are intended to speak only as of the date made. Such statements are often characterized by the use of qualifying words (and their derivatives) such as “expect,” “believe,” “estimate,” “plan,” “project,” or other statements concerning our opinions o judgment about future events. Our actual results may differ materially from those anticipated in any forward-looking statements, as they will depend on many factors about which we are unsure, including many factors which are beyond our control. Factors that could influence the accuracy of such forward-looking statements include, but are not limited to, the financial success or changing strategies of our customers, our level of success in integrating acquisitions, actions of government regulators, the level of market interest rates, and general economic conditions. For additional information about factors that could affect the matters discussed in this paragraph, see the “Risk Factors” section in Item 1A of this report.

PART I

Item 1. Business

General Description

First Bancorp (the “Company”) is a bank holding company. Our principal activity is the ownership and operation of First Bank (the “Bank”), a state-chartered bank with its main office in Troy, North Carolina. The Company is also the parent to a series of statutory business trusts organized under the laws of the State of Delaware that were created for the purpose of issuing trust preferred debt securities. Our outstanding debt associated with these trusts was $46.4 million at December 31, 2012 and 2011.

The Company was incorporated in North Carolina on December 8, 1983, as Montgomery Bancorp, for the purpose of acquiring 100% of the outstanding common stock of the Bank through a stock-for-stock exchange. On December 31, 1986, the Company changed its name to First Bancorp to conform its name to the name of the Bank, which had changed its name from Bank of Montgomery to First Bank in 1985.

The Bank was organized in 1934 and began banking operations in 1935 as the Bank of Montgomery, named for the county in which it operated. The Bank’s main office is in Troy, population 3,500, located in the center of Montgomery

County, approximately 60 miles east of Charlotte, 50 miles south of Greensboro, and 80 miles southwest of Raleigh. As of December 31, 2012, we conducted business from 97 branches covering a geographical area from Little River, South Carolina to the southeast, to Wilmington, North Carolina to the east, to Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina to the northeast, to Salem, Virginia to the north, to Abingdon, Virginia to the northwest, and to Asheville, North Carolina to the west. We also have loan production offices in Greenville, North Carolina and Blacksburg, Virginia. Of the Bank's 97 branches, 81 branches are in North Carolina, nine branches are in South Carolina and seven branches are in Virginia (where we operate under the name "First Bank of Virginia"). Ranked by assets, the Bank was the fourth largest bank headquartered in North Carolina as of December 31, 2012.

On June 19, 2009, we acquired substantially all of the assets and liabilities of Cooperative Bank, which had been closed earlier that day by regulatory authorities. Cooperative Bank operated through twenty-four branches located primarily in the coastal region of North Carolina. In connection with the acquisition, we assumed assets with a book value of $959 million, including $829 million in loans and $706 million in deposits. The loans and foreclosed real estate purchased in the acquisition are covered by loss share agreements between the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) and First Bank which affords the Bank significant loss protection. We recorded a gain of $67.9 million as a result of this acquisition. Additional information regarding this transaction is contained in the Company's 2009 Annual Report on Form 10-K.

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On January 21, 2011, we acquired substantially all of the assets and liabilities of The Bank of Asheville, which had been closed earlier that day by regulatory authorities. The Bank of Asheville operated through five branches located in or near Asheville, North Carolina. In connection with the acquisition, we assumed assets with a book value of $190 million, including $154 million in loans and $192 million in deposits. Substantially all of the acquired loans and foreclosed real-estate are covered by loss share agreements with the FDIC, which affords the Bank significant loss protection. We recorded a gain of $10.2 million as a result of this acquisition. Additional information regarding this transaction is also contained in Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations and Note 2 to the consolidated financial statements.

As of December 31, 2012, the Bank had two wholly owned subsidiaries, First Bank Insurance Services, Inc. ("First Bank Insurance") and First Troy SPE, LLC. First Bank Insurance's primary business activity is the placement of property and casualty insurance coverage. First Troy SPE, LLC, which was organized in December 2009, is a holding entity for certain foreclosed properties.

Our principal executive offices are located at 341 North Main Street, Troy, North Carolina 27371-0508, and our telephone number is (910) 576-6171. Unless the context requires otherwise, references to the "Company," "we," "our," or "us" in this annual report on Form 10-K shall mean collectively First Bancorp and its consolidated subsidiaries.

General Business

We engage in a full range of banking activities, with the acceptance of deposits and the making of loans being our most basic activities. We offer deposit products such as checking, savings, and money market accounts, as well as time deposits, including various types of certificates of deposits (CDs) and individual retirement accounts (IRAs). We provide loans for a wide range of consumer and commercial purposes, including loans for business, agriculture, real estate, personal uses, home improvement and automobiles. We also offer credit cards, debit cards, letters of credit, safe deposit box rentals and electronic funds transfer services, including wire transfers. In addition, we offer internet banking, mobile banking, cash management and bank-by-phone capabilities to our customers, and are affiliated with ATM networks that give our customers access to 67,000 ATMs, with no surcharge fee. In 2007, we introduced remote deposit capture, which provides business customers with a method to electronically transmit checks received from customers into their bank account without having to visit a branch. In 2008, we joined the Certificate of Deposit Account Registry Service (CDARS), which gives our customers the ability to obtain FDIC insurance on deposits of up to $50 million, while continuing to work directly with their local First Bank branch.

Because the majority of our customers are individuals and small to medium-sized businesses located in the counties we serve, management does not believe that the loss of a single customer or group of customers would have a material adverse impact on the Bank. There are no seasonal factors that tend to have any material effect on the Bank's business, and we do not rely on foreign sources of funds or income. Because we operate primarily within North Carolina, southwestern Virginia and northeastern South Carolina, the economic conditions of these areas could have a material impact on the Company. See additional discussion below in the section entitled "Territory Served and Competition."

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Beginning in 1999, First Bank Insurance began offering non-FDIC insured investment and insurance products, including mutual funds, annuities, long-term care insurance, life insurance, and company retirement plans, as well as financial planning services (the "investments division"). In May 2001, First Bank Insurance added to its product line when it acquired two insurance agencies that specialized in the placement of property and casualty insurance. In October 2003, the "investments division" of First Bank Insurance became a part of the Bank. The primary activity of First Bank Insurance is now the placement of property and casualty insurance products. In February 2010, First Bank Insurance acquired The Insurance Center, Inc., a Troy-based property and casualty insurance agency with approximately 500 customers.

First Bancorp Capital Trust II and First Bancorp Capital Trust III were organized in December 2003 for the purpose of issuing $20.6 million in debt securities ($10.3 million was issued from each trust). These borrowings are due on January 23, 2034 and are also structured as trust preferred capital securities in order to qualify as regulatory capital. These debt securities are callable by the Company at par on any quarterly interest payment date beginning on January 23, 2009. The interest rate on these debt securities adjusts on a quarterly basis at a weighted average rate of three-month LIBOR plus 2.70%.

First Bancorp Capital Trust IV was organized in April 2006 for the purpose of issuing $25.8 million in debt securities. These borrowings are due on June 15, 2036 and are also structured as trust preferred capital securities that qualify as regulatory capital. These debt securities are callable by the Company at par on any quarterly interest payment date beginning on June 15, 2011. The interest rate on these debt securities adjusts on a quarterly basis at a rate of three-month LIBOR plus 1.39%.

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Territory Served and Competition

Our headquarters are located in Troy, Montgomery County, North Carolina. At the end of 2012, we served primarily the south central region (sometimes called the Piedmont region), the central mountain region and the eastern coastal region of North Carolina, with additional operations in northeastern South Carolina and southwestern Virginia. The following table presents, for each county where we operated as of December 31, 2012, the number of bank branches operated by the Company within the county, the approximate amount of deposits with the Company in the county as of December 31, 2012, our approximate deposit market share at June 30, 2012, and the number of bank competitors located in the county at June 30, 2012.

County	Number of Branches	Deposits (in millions)	Market Share	Number of Competitors
Anson, NC	1	$ 12	4.5%	5
Beaufort, NC	3	36	2.9%	7
Bladen, NC	1	24	10.2%	5
Brunswick, NC	4	96	5.8%	11
Buncombe, NC	4	96	2.3%	19
Cabarrus, NC	2	38	2.1%	11
Carteret, NC	2	21	2.3%	8
Chatham, NC	2	73	9.8%	10
Chesterfield, SC	3	55	15.1%	7
Columbus, NC	2	29	4.6%	5
Dare, NC	1	17	1.8%	10
Davidson, NC	3	97	4.0%	10
Dillon, SC	3	69	24.4%	3
Duplin, NC	3	117	26.2%	7
Florence, SC	2	32	1.7%	13
Guilford, NC	1	58	0.7%	20
Harnett, NC	3	114	13.4%	9
Horry, SC	1	4	0.1%	23
Iredell, NC	2	31	1.4%	22
Lee, NC	4	188	24.2%	10
Montgomery, NC	5	106	39.1%	4
Montgomery, VA	2	59	3.3%	13
Moore, NC	11	421	25.7%	11
New Hanover, NC	5	158	3.8%	20
Onslow, NC	2	41	3.9%	9
Pulaski, VA	1	26	6.5%	8
Randolph, NC	4	71	4.4%	15
Richmond, NC	1	19	3.3%	6
Roanoke, VA	1	4	0.0%	13
Robeson, NC	5	195	18.5%	9
Rockingham, NC	1	29	2.7%	11
Rowan, NC	2	53	3.3%	13
Scotland, NC	2	61	18.0%	6
Stanly, NC	4	94	9.9%	6

Wake, NC	1	25	0.1%	31
Washington, VA	1	32	3.1%	16
Wythe, VA	2	79	13.8%	11
Brokered & Internet Deposits	—	141		
Total	97	$ 2,821		

Our branches and facilities are primarily located in small communities whose economies are based primarily on services, manufacturing and light industry. Although our market is predominantly small communities and rural areas, the market area is not dependent on agriculture. Textiles, furniture, mobile homes, electronics, plastic and metal fabrication, forest products, food products, and chicken hatcheries are among the leading manufacturing industries in the trade area. Leading producers of lumber and rugs are located in Montgomery County, North Carolina. The Pinehurst area within Moore County, North Carolina, is a widely known golf resort and retirement area. The High Point, North Carolina, area is widely known for its furniture market. New Hanover and Brunswick Counties, located in the southeastern coastal region of North Carolina, are popular with tourists and have significant retirement populations. Buncombe County, located in the western region of North Carolina, is a highly diverse area with industries in manufacturing, service, and tourism. Additionally, several of the communities served by the Company are “bedroom” communities of large cities like Charlotte, Raleigh and Greensboro, while several branches are located in medium-sized cities such as Albemarle, Asheboro, High Point, Southern Pines and Sanford. We also have branches in small communities such as Bennett, Polkton, Vass, and Harmony.

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Approximately 15% of our deposit base is in Moore County. Accordingly, material changes in competition, the economy or population of Moore County could materially impact the Company. No other county comprises more than 10% of our deposit base.

We compete in our various market areas with, among others, several large interstate bank holding companies. These large competitors have substantially greater resources than us, including broader geographic markets, higher lending limits and the ability to make greater use of large-scale advertising and promotions. A significant number of interstate banking acquisitions have taken place in the past decade, thus further increasing the size and financial resources of some of our competitors, some of which are among the largest bank holding companies in the nation. In many of our markets, we also compete against banks that have been organized within the past ten to fifteen years. Until recently, these new banks often focused on loan and deposit balance sheet growth, and not necessarily on earnings profitability, which often resulted in them offering more attractive terms on loans and deposits than we were willing to offer in light of our profitability goals. Due to capital considerations, most of these banks are no longer seeking balance sheet growth. This has increased our ability to compete for loans, but the same banks continue to offer premium rates on deposits, presumably in an effort to maintain maximum liquidity during these challenging economic times. Moore County, which as noted above comprises a disproportionate share of our deposits, is a particularly competitive market, with at least eleven other financial institutions having a physical presence.

We compete not only against banking organizations, but also against a wide range of financial service providers, including federally and state-chartered savings and loan institutions, credit unions, investment and brokerage firms and small-loan or consumer finance companies. One of the credit unions in our market area is among the largest in the nation. Competition among financial institutions of all types is virtually unlimited with respect to legal ability and authority to provide most financial services. We also experience competition from internet banks, particularly in the area of time deposits.

Despite the competitive market, we believe we have certain advantages over our competition in the areas we serve. We seek to maintain a distinct local identity in each of the communities we serve and we actively sponsor and participate in local civic affairs. Most lending and other customer-related business decisions can be made without the delays often associated with larger institutions. Additionally, employment of local managers and personnel in various offices and low turnover of personnel enable us to establish and maintain long-term relationships with individual and corporate customers.

Lending Policy and Procedures

Conservative lending policies and procedures and appropriate underwriting standards are high priorities of the Bank. Loans are approved under our written loan policy, which provides that lending officers, principally branch managers, have authority to approve loans of various amounts up to $350,000, with lending limits varying depending upon the experience of the lending officer and whether the loan is secured or unsecured. Each of our regional senior lending officers has discretion to approve secured loans of various principal amounts up to $500,000 and together can approve

loans up to $4,000,000. Loans above $4,000,000 must be approved by the Executive Committee of the Company’s board of directors.

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A committee of our board of directors reviews and approves loans that exceed management’s lending authority, loans to executive officers, directors, and their affiliates and, in certain instances, other types of loans. New credit extensions are reviewed daily by our senior management and at least monthly by our board committee.

We continually monitor our loan portfolio to identify areas of concern and to enable us to take corrective action. Lending officers and the board of directors meet periodically to review past due loans and portfolio quality, while assuring that the Bank is appropriately meeting the credit needs of the communities it serves. Individual lending officers are responsible for pursuing collection of past-due amounts and monitoring any changes in the financial status of borrowers.

We also contract with an independent consulting firm to review new loan originations meeting certain criteria, as well as to assign risk grades to existing credits meeting certain thresholds. The consulting firm’s observations, comments, and risk grades, including variances with the Bank’s risk grades, are shared with the audit committee of the Company’s board of directors and are considered by management in setting Bank policy, as well as in evaluating the adequacy of our allowance for loan losses. The consulting firm also provides training on a periodic basis to our lending officers to keep them updated on current developments in the marketplace. For additional information, see “Allowance for Loan Losses and Loan Loss Experience” under Item 7 below.

Investment Policy and Procedures

We have adopted an investment policy designed to maximize our income from funds not needed to meet loan demand, in a manner consistent with appropriate liquidity and risk objectives. Pursuant to this policy, we may invest in federal, state and municipal obligations, federal agency obligations, public housing authority bonds, industrial development revenue bonds, Federal Home Loan Bank bonds, Fannie Mae bonds, Government National Mortgage Association bonds, Freddie Mac bonds, Small Business Administration bonds, and, to a limited extent, corporate bonds. Except for corporate bonds, our investments must be rated at least Baa by Moody’s or BBB by Standard and Poor’s. Securities rated below A are periodically reviewed for creditworthiness. We may purchase non-rated municipal bonds only if such bonds are in our general market area and we determine these bonds have a credit risk no greater than the minimum ratings referred to above. Industrial development authority bonds, which normally are not rated, are purchased only if they are judged to possess a high degree of credit soundness to assure reasonably prompt sale at a fair value. We are also authorized by our board of directors to invest a portion of our securities portfolio in high quality corporate bonds, with the amount of such bonds not to exceed 15% of the entire securities portfolio. Prior to purchasing a corporate bond, the Company’s management performs due diligence on the issuer of the bond, and the purchase is not made unless we believe that the purchase of the bond bears no more risk to the Company than would an unsecured loan to the same company.

Our Chief Investment Officer implements the investment policy, monitors the investment portfolio, recommends portfolio strategies and reports to the Company’s Investment Committee. The Investment Committee generally meets on a quarterly basis to review investment activity and to assess the overall position of the securities portfolio. The

Investment Committee compares our securities portfolio with portfolios of other companies of comparable size. In addition, reports of all purchases, sales, issuer calls, net profits or losses and market appreciation or depreciation of the securities portfolio are reviewed by our board of directors. Once a quarter, our interest rate risk exposure is evaluated by our board of directors. Each year, the written investment policy is approved by the board of directors.

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Mergers and Acquisitions

As part of our operations, we have pursued an acquisition strategy over the years to augment our internal growth. We regularly evaluate the potential acquisition of, or merger with, various financial institutions. Our acquisitions have generally fallen into one of three categories - 1) an acquisition of a financial institution or branch thereof within a market in which we operate, 2) an acquisition of a financial institution or branch thereof in a market contiguous or nearly contiguous to a market in which we operate, or 3) an acquisition of a company that has products or services that we do not currently offer. Historically, we have paid for our acquisitions with cash and/or common stock and any operating income or loss has been fully borne by the Company beginning on the closing date of the acquisition.

In 2009, FDIC-assisted acquisitions began to occur frequently as banking regulators closed problem banks. In FDIC-assisted transactions, the acquiring bank often does not pay any consideration for the failed bank, and in some cases receives cash from the FDIC as part of the transaction. In addition, the acquiring bank usually enters into one or more loss share agreements with the FDIC, which affords the acquiring bank significant loss protection. As discussed below, we completed FDIC-assisted transactions in 2009 and 2011.

We believe that we can enhance our earnings by pursuing these types of acquisition opportunities through any combination or all of the following: 1) achieving cost efficiencies, 2) enhancing the acquiree’s earnings or gaining new customers by introducing a more successful banking model with more products and services to the acquiree’s market base, 3) increasing customer satisfaction or gaining new customers by providing more locations for the convenience of customers, and 4) leveraging the customer base by offering new products and services. There is also the possibility, especially in a FDIC-assisted transaction, to record a gain on the acquisition date arising from the difference between the purchase price and the acquisition date fair value of the acquired assets and liabilities.

Since 2000, we have completed acquisitions in each of the three categories described above. We have completed several whole-bank traditional acquisitions in our existing and contiguous markets; we have purchased numerous bank branches from other banks (both in existing market area and in contiguous/nearly contiguous markets) and we have acquired several insurance agencies, which provided us with the ability to offer property and casualty insurance coverage.

In addition to the traditional acquisitions discussed above, in both 2009 and 2011 we acquired the operations of failed banks in FDIC-assisted transactions. On June 19, 2009, we acquired substantially all of the assets and liabilities of Cooperative Bank in a FDIC-assisted transaction. Cooperative Bank operated through twenty-one branches in North Carolina and three branches in South Carolina in the same markets in which the Bank was already operating, as well as in several new, mostly contiguous markets. In connection with the acquisition, the Bank assumed assets with a book value of $959 million, including $829 million in loans and $706 million in deposits. See the Company’s 2009 Annual Report on Form 10-K for more information on this acquisition.

On January 21, 2011, we acquired substantially all of the assets and liabilities of The Bank of Asheville in a FDIC-assisted transaction. The Bank of Asheville operated through five branches in or near Asheville, North Carolina. This market was a new market for the Bank. In connection with the acquisition, the Bank assumed assets with a book value of $190 million, including $154 million in loans and $192 million in deposits. See Note 2 to the consolidated financial statements for more information on this acquisition.

On August 24, 2012, we completed the purchase of a branch of Gateway Bank & Trust Co. located in Wilmington, North Carolina. We assumed the branch's $9 million in deposits. No loans were acquired in this transaction. We also did not purchase the branch building, but instead transferred the acquired accounts to one of our nearby existing branches.

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At December 31, 2012, we had one pending acquisition. On September 26, 2012, we entered into an agreement to assume all of the deposits, totaling approximately $64 million, and acquire selected performing loans, totaling approximately $22 million, of the Four Oaks Bank & Trust Company branches located in Southern Pines, North Carolina and Rockingham, North Carolina. We have agreed to acquire the Rockingham branch building, while the Southern Pines branch facility will not be acquired. The deposits and loans of the Southern Pines branch will be initially assigned to a First Bank branch located nearby. The transaction is expected to close in the first quarter of 2013, subject to regulatory approval.

There are many factors that we consider when evaluating how much to offer for potential acquisition candidates (including FDIC-assisted transactions) with a few of the more significant factors being projected impact on earnings per share, projected impact on capital, and projected impact on book value and tangible book value. Significant assumptions that affect this analysis include the estimated future earnings stream of the acquisition candidate, estimated credit and other losses to be incurred, the amount of cost efficiencies that can be realized, and the interest rate earned/lost on the cash received/paid. In addition to these primary factors, we also consider other factors including (but not limited to) marketplace acquisition statistics, location of the candidate in relation to our expansion strategy, market growth potential, management of the candidate, potential integration issues (including corporate culture), and the size of the acquisition candidate.

We plan to continue to evaluate acquisition opportunities that could potentially benefit the Company and its shareholders. These opportunities may include acquisitions that do not fit the categories discussed above.

For a further discussion of recent acquisition activity, see “Merger and Acquisition Activity” under Item 7 below.

Employees

As of December 31, 2012, we had 810 full-time and 42 part-time employees. We are not a party to any collective bargaining agreements, and we consider our employee relations to be good.

Supervision and Regulation

As a bank holding company, we are subject to supervision, examination and regulation by the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System (the “Federal Reserve Board”) and the North Carolina Office of the Commissioner of Banks (the “Commissioner”). The Bank is subject to supervision and examination by the FDIC and the Commissioner. For additional information, see Note 16 to the consolidated financial statements.

Supervision and Regulation of the Company

The Company is a bank holding company within the meaning of the Bank Holding Company Act of 1956, as amended. The Company is also regulated by the Commissioner under the North Carolina Bank Holding Company Act of 1984.

A bank holding company is required to file quarterly reports and other information regarding its business operations and those of its subsidiaries with the Federal Reserve Board. It is also subject to examination by the Federal Reserve Board and is required to obtain Federal Reserve Board approval prior to making certain acquisitions of other institutions or voting securities. The Federal Reserve Board requires the Company to maintain certain levels of capital - see “Capital Resources and Shareholders’ Equity” under Item 7 below. The Federal Reserve Board also has the authority to take enforcement action against any bank holding company that commits any unsafe or unsound practice, or violates certain laws, regulations or conditions imposed in writing by the Federal Reserve Board. The Federal Reserve Board generally prohibits a bank holding company from declaring or paying a cash dividend that would impose undue pressure on the capital of subsidiary banks or would be funded only through borrowing or other arrangements which might adversely affect a bank holding company’s financial position. Under the Federal Reserve Board policy, a bank holding company is not permitted to continue its existing rate of cash dividends on its common stock unless its net income is sufficient to fully fund each dividend and its prospective rate of earnings retention appears consistent with its capital needs, asset quality and overall financial condition.

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The Commissioner is empowered to regulate certain acquisitions of North Carolina banks and bank holding companies, issue cease and desist orders for violations of North Carolina banking laws, and promulgate rules necessary to effectuate the purposes of the North Carolina Bank Holding Company Act of 1984.

Regulatory authorities have cease and desist powers over bank holding companies and their nonbank subsidiaries where their actions would constitute a serious threat to the safety, soundness or stability of a subsidiary bank. Those authorities may compel holding companies to invest additional capital into banking subsidiaries upon acquisitions or in the event of significant loan losses or rapid growth of loans or deposits.

The United States Congress and the North Carolina General Assembly have periodically considered and adopted legislation that has impacted the Company.

Supervision and Regulation of the Bank

Federal banking regulations applicable to all depository financial institutions, among other things: (i) provide federal bank regulatory agencies with powers to prevent unsafe and unsound banking practices; (ii) restrict preferential loans by banks to “insiders” of banks; (iii) require banks to keep information on loans to major shareholders and executive officers and (iv) bar certain director and officer interlocks between financial institutions.

As a state-chartered bank, the Bank is subject to the provisions of the North Carolina banking statutes and to regulation by the Commissioner. The Commissioner has a wide range of regulatory authority over the activities and operations of the Bank, and the Commissioner’s staff conducts periodic examinations of the Bank and its affiliates to ensure compliance with state banking regulations and to assess the safety and soundness of the Bank. Among other things, the Commissioner regulates the merger and consolidation of state-chartered banks, the payment of dividends, loans to officers and directors, recordkeeping, types and amounts of loans and investments, and the establishment of branches. The Commissioner also has cease and desist powers over state-chartered banks for violations of state banking laws or regulations and for unsafe or unsound conduct that is likely to jeopardize the interest of depositors.

The dividends that may be paid by the Bank to the Company are subject to legal limitations under North Carolina law. In addition, regulatory authorities may restrict dividends that may be paid by the Bank or the Company’s other subsidiaries. The ability of the Company to pay dividends to its shareholders is largely dependent on the dividends paid to the Company by the Bank.

The FDIC is authorized to approve conversions, mergers, consolidations and assumptions of deposit liability transactions between insured banks and uninsured banks or institutions, and to prevent capital or surplus diminution in

such transactions if the resulting, continuing, or assumed bank is an insured nonmember bank. In addition, the FDIC monitors the Bank’s compliance with several banking statutes, such as the Depository Institution Management Interlocks Act and the Community Reinvestment Act of 1977. The FDIC also conducts periodic examinations of the Bank to assess its safety and soundness and its compliance with banking laws and regulations, and it has the power to implement changes to, or restrictions on, the Bank’s operations if it finds that a violation is occurring or is threatened.

U.S. Treasury Capital Purchase Program (TARP)

On October 3, 2008, in response to the financial crises affecting the banking system and financial markets and going concern threats to investment banks and other financial institutions, the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 (the “EESA”) was signed into law. Pursuant to the EESA, the U.S. Treasury was given the authority to, among other things, purchase up to $700 billion of mortgages, mortgage-backed securities and certain other financial instruments from financial institutions for the purpose of stabilizing and providing liquidity to the U.S. financial markets.

On October 14, 2008, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Treasury announced that the Treasury would purchase equity stakes in a wide variety of banks and thrifts. Under the program, known as the Capital Purchase Program (also known as “TARP”), the Treasury made $250 billion of capital available from EESA to U.S. financial institutions in the form of purchases of preferred stock. In addition to the preferred stock, the Treasury received, from participating financial institutions, warrants to purchase common stock with an aggregate market price equal to 15% of the preferred investment. Participating financial institutions were required to adopt the Treasury’s standards for executive compensation and corporate governance for the period during which the Treasury holds equity issued under the Capital Purchase Program.

Although we believed that our capital position was sound, we concluded that the Capital Purchase Program would allow us to raise additional capital on favorable terms in comparison with other available alternatives. Accordingly, we applied to participate in the Capital Purchase Program. The Treasury approved our application in December 2008, and we received $65 million in proceeds from the sale of 65,000 shares of Series A cumulative perpetual preferred stock with a liquidation value of $1,000 per share to the Treasury on January 9, 2009. The terms of the preferred stock issued to the Treasury require a dividend of 5% for the first five years and 9% thereafter. As part of the transaction, we also granted the Treasury a ten-year warrant to purchase up to 616,308 shares of our common stock at an exercise price of $15.82 per share.

On September 1, 2011, we redeemed the 65,000 shares of outstanding Series A preferred stock from the Treasury for a redemption price of $65 million, plus unpaid dividends. We funded the majority of this transaction by simultaneously issuing Series B preferred stock to the Treasury in connection with our participation in the Small Business Lending Fund (see below). In November 2011, we repurchased the outstanding common stock warrant from the Treasury at a price of $1.50 per common share for a total of $924,000. See Note 19 to the consolidated financial statements for more information on these transactions.

Small Business Lending Fund

In December 2010, the U.S. Treasury announced the creation of the Small Business Lending Fund (SBLF) program, which was established under the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010. The SBLF was created to encourage lending to small businesses by providing capital to qualified community banks at favorable rates.

Interested financial institutions were required to submit an application and a small business lending plan. Less than half of the financial institutions that applied for the SBLF were approved. We were one of the institutions approved, and on September 1, 2011, we completed the sale of $63.5 million of Series B preferred stock to the Treasury under the SBLF. Under the terms of the stock purchase agreement, the Treasury received 63,500 shares of Series B non-cumulative perpetual preferred stock with a liquidation value of $1,000 per share, in exchange for $63.5 million. As noted above, we used the $63.5 million received from this issuance along with $1.5 million of existing Company funds to redeem the $65 million of preferred stock issued to the Treasury as part of the Capital Purchase Program. The initial dividend rate on SBLF preferred stock was 5%. Depending on our success in meeting certain loan growth targets to small businesses, the dividend rate could decrease to as low as 1% for a period of time. Based on our level of small business lending as of December 31, 2012, we expect that our dividend rate will be 1% beginning April 1, 2013. See Note 19 to the consolidated financial statements for more information.

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FDIC Insurance

As a member of the FDIC, the Bank's deposits are insured by the FDIC. For this protection, each member bank pays a quarterly statutory assessment (which was previously based on deposits, but is now based on average total assets less average tangible equity) and is subject to the rules and regulations of the FDIC.

In December 2009, the FDIC required banks to prepay their estimated insurance premiums for 2010 through 2012, which resulted in the Bank prepaying approximately $16.9 million in premiums. This prepaid amount is being recorded as expense on our books as it is incurred. We recognized approximately $4.4 million in FDIC insurance expense in 2010.

In February 2011, the FDIC announced changes to the deposit insurance program whereby FDIC deposit insurance assessments are based on average total assets less average tangible equity instead of the previous methodology that was based on deposits. Also, new assessment rates were adopted. The new assessment methodology and assessment rates became effective April 1, 2011. These changes were favorable to our insurance rates, and we recognized approximately $3.0 million and $2.7 million in FDIC insurance expense in 2011 and 2012, respectively, compared to the previously noted insurance expense of $4.4 million in 2010.

Legislative and Regulatory Developments

Given the ongoing financial crisis and the current presidential administration, legislation that would affect regulation in the banking industry is introduced in most legislative sessions. The most significant recent legislative and regulatory developments impacting the Company are 1) the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act of 2010, 2) Automated Overdraft Payment Regulation, and 3) Basel III, each of which is discussed below.

Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act of 2010

On July 21, 2010, the Dodd-Frank Act became law. The Dodd-Frank Act has had and will continue to have a broad impact on the financial services industry, including significant regulatory and compliance changes including, among other things,

- grants shareholders of U.S. publicly traded companies an advisory vote on executive compensation;
- enhances independence requirements for compensation committee members;

- requires companies listed on national securities exchanges to adopt clawback policies for incentive-based compensation plans applicable to executive officers; and
- provides the SEC with authority to adopt proxy access rules that would allow shareholders of publicly traded companies to nominate candidates for election as directors and require such companies to include such nominees in its proxy materials.

In addition, the Dodd-Frank Act establishes a new framework for systemic risk oversight within the financial system that will be enforced by new and existing federal regulatory agencies, including the Financial Stability Oversight Council (FSOC), the Federal Reserve Bank (FRB), the Office of Comptroller of the Currency, the FDIC, and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). The following description briefly summarizes aspects of the Dodd-Frank Act that could impact the Company, both currently and prospectively.

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Deposit Insurance. The Dodd-Frank Act made permanent the $250,000 deposit insurance limit for insured deposits, which was an increase from the previous limit of $100,000. The Act also provided for unlimited deposit insurance coverage on non-interest bearing transaction accounts at all insured depository institutions effective December 31, 2010 through December 31, 2012. Amendments to the Federal Deposit Insurance Act also revised the assessment base against which an insured depository institution's deposit insurance premiums paid to the FDIC's Deposit Insurance Fund (DIF) will be calculated. Under the amendments, which became effective on April 1, 2011, the FDIC assessment base is no longer the institution's deposit base, but rather its average consolidated total assets less its average tangible equity. The Dodd-Frank Act also changed the minimum designated reserve ratio of the DIF, increasing the minimum from 1.15% to 1.35% of the estimated amount of total insured deposits, and eliminating the requirement that the FDIC pay dividends to depository institutions when the reserve ratio exceeds certain thresholds by September 30, 2020.

Interest on Demand Deposits. The Dodd-Frank Act provided that beginning July 21, 2011 depository institutions were permitted to pay interest on business demand deposits with no limit on the number of monthly withdrawals. Prior to July 21, 2011, we entered into securities repurchase agreements with business customers in order to allow them to earn interest on their excess funds. With the prohibition of paying interest now removed, we have been able to pay interest on our customers' deposits without the need to enter into a securities repurchase agreement. During 2011 and 2012, approximately $38 million and $17 million, respectively, in liabilities previously classified as "securities sold under agreements to repurchase" were moved to the "interest-bearing checking accounts" category. We did not experience a material increase in total interest expense, but rather only an insignificant amount of reclassification among interest expense categories as a result of these changes.

Trust Preferred Securities. The Dodd-Frank Act prohibits bank holding companies from including in their regulatory Tier 1 capital hybrid debt and equity securities issued on or after May 19, 2010. Among the hybrid debt and equity securities included in this prohibition are trust preferred securities, which we have issued in the past in order to raise additional Tier 1 capital and otherwise improve our regulatory capital ratios. Although we may continue to include our existing trust preferred securities as Tier 1 capital, the prohibition on the use of these securities as Tier 1 capital may limit our ability to raise capital in the future.

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. The Dodd-Frank Act creates a new, independent federal agency called the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau ("CFPB"), which is granted broad rulemaking, supervisory and enforcement powers under various federal consumer financial protection laws, including the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, Truth in Lending Act, Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act, Fair Credit Reporting Act, Fair Debt Collection Act, the Consumer Financial Privacy provisions of the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act and certain other statutes. The CFPB will have examination and primary enforcement authority with respect to depository institutions with $10 billion or more in assets. Depository institutions with less than $10 billion in assets, such as the Bank, will be subject to rules promulgated by the CFPB but will continue to be examined and supervised by federal banking regulators for consumer compliance purposes. The CFPB will have authority to prevent unfair, deceptive or abusive practices in connection with the offering of consumer financial products. The Dodd-Frank Act also authorizes the CFPB to establish certain minimum standards for the origination of residential mortgages, including a determination of the borrower's ability to repay. Under the Dodd-Frank Act, financial institutions may not make a residential mortgage loan unless they make a "reasonable and good faith determination" that the consumer has a "reasonable ability" to repay the loan. In addition, the Dodd-Frank Act will allow borrowers to raise certain defenses to foreclosure if they receive any loan other than a "qualified mortgage" as defined by the CFPB. On January 10, 2013, the CFPB published final

rules to, among other things, define “qualified mortgage” and specify the types of income and assets that may be considered in the ability-to-repay determination, the permissible sources for verification, and the required methods of calculating the loan's monthly payments. For example, the rules extend the requirement that creditors verify and document a borrower's “income and assets” to include all “information” that creditors rely on in determining repayment ability. The rules also provide further examples of third-party documents that may be relied on for such verification, such as government records and check-cashing or funds-transfer service receipts. The new rules will take effect on January 10, 2014. The Dodd-Frank Act also permits states to adopt consumer protection laws and standards that are more stringent than those adopted at the federal level and, in certain circumstances, permits state attorneys general to enforce compliance with both the state and federal laws and regulations. Compliance with any such new regulations established by the CFPB and/or states could reduce our revenue, increase our cost of operations, and limit our ability to expand into certain products and services.

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Debit Card Interchange Fees. The Dodd-Frank Act gives the FRB the authority to establish rules regarding interchange fees charged for electronic debit transactions by payment card issuers having assets over $10 billion and to enforce a new statutory requirement that such fees be reasonable and proportional to the actual cost of a transaction to the issuer. While we are not directly subject to these rules for so long as our assets do not exceed $10 billion, our activities as a debit card issuer may nevertheless be indirectly impacted by the change in the applicable debit card market caused by these regulations, which may require us to match any new lower fee structure implemented by larger financial institutions in order to remain competitive in the future. The new caps on interchange fees for banks with assets greater than $10 billion became effective October 1, 2011. To date, the Company has not noted any significant indirect negative effects of the interchange fee caps that are applicable to the larger financial institutions.

Increased Capital Standards and Enhanced Supervision. The Dodd-Frank Act requires the federal banking agencies to establish minimum leverage and risk-based capital requirements for banks and bank holding companies. These new standards will be no less strict than existing regulatory capital and leverage standards applicable to insured depository institutions and may, in fact, become higher once the agencies promulgate the new standards. Compliance with heightened capital standards may reduce our ability to generate or originate revenue-producing assets and thereby restrict revenue generation from banking and non-banking operations.

Transactions with Affiliates. The Dodd-Frank Act enhances the requirements for certain transactions with affiliates under Section 23A and 23B of the Federal Reserve Act, including an expansion of the definition of “covered transactions,” and an increase in the amount of time for which collateral requirements regarding covered transactions must be maintained.

Transactions with Insiders. The Dodd-Frank Act expands insider transaction limitations through the strengthening of loan restrictions to insiders and the expansion of the types of transactions subject to the various limits, including derivative transactions, repurchase agreements, reverse repurchase agreements and securities lending and borrowing transactions. The Dodd-Frank Act also places restrictions on certain asset sales to and from an insider of an institution, including requirements that such sales be on market terms and, in certain circumstances, receive the approval of the institution’s board of directors.

Enhanced Lending Limits. The Dodd-Frank Act strengthens the existing limits on a depository institution’s credit exposure to one borrower. Federal banking law currently limits a national bank’s ability to extend credit to one person or group of related persons to an amount that does not exceed certain thresholds. The Dodd-Frank Act expands the scope of these restrictions to include credit exposure arising from derivative transactions, repurchase agreements and securities lending and borrowing transactions. It also will eventually prohibit state-chartered banks from engaging in derivative transactions unless the state lending limit laws take into account credit exposure to such transactions.

Corporate Governance. The Dodd-Frank Act addresses many corporate governance and executive compensation matters that will affect most U.S. publicly traded companies, including the Company. The Dodd-Frank Act:

- grants shareholders of U.S. publicly traded companies an advisory vote on executive compensation;
- enhances independence requirements for compensation committee members;
- requires companies listed on national securities exchanges to adopt clawback policies for incentive-based compensation plans applicable to executive officers; and
- provides the SEC with authority to adopt proxy access rules that would allow shareholders of publicly traded companies to nominate candidates for election as directors and require such companies to include such nominees in its proxy materials.

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Many of the requirements of the Dodd-Frank Act will be subject to implementation over the course of several years. While we do not currently expect the final requirements of the Dodd-Frank Act to have a material adverse impact on the Company, we do expect them to negatively impact our profitability, require changes to certain of our business practices, including limitations on fee income opportunities, and impose more stringent capital, liquidity and leverage requirements upon the Company. These changes may also require us to invest significant management attention and resources to evaluate and make any changes necessary to comply with the new statutory and regulatory requirements.

Automated Overdraft Payment Regulation

In recent years, the Federal Reserve and FDIC have enacted consumer protection regulations related to automated overdraft payment programs offered by financial institutions. In November 2009, the Federal Reserve amended its Regulation E to prohibit financial institutions, including the Company, from charging consumers fees for paying overdrafts on automated teller machine and one-time debit card transactions, unless a consumer consents, or opts in, to the overdraft service for those types of transactions. The Regulation E amendments also require financial institutions to provide consumers with a notice that explains the financial institution’s overdraft services, including the fees associated with the service and the consumer’s choices. We have completed implementation of the changes as required by the Regulation E amendments, which resulted in reductions to overdraft fees that we were able to collect beginning in the second half of 2010.

In November 2010, the FDIC supplemented the Regulation E amendments by requiring FDIC-supervised institutions, including the Bank, to implement additional changes relating to automated overdraft payment programs by July 1, 2011. The most significant of these changes require financial institutions to monitor overdraft payment programs for “excessive or chronic” customer use and undertake “meaningful and effective” follow-up action with customers that overdraw their accounts more than six times during a rolling 12-month period. The additional guidance also imposes daily limits on overdraft charges, requires institutions to review and modify check-clearing procedures, prominently distinguish account balances from available overdraft coverage amounts and requires increased board and management oversight regarding overdraft payment programs. We have now implemented the supplemental requirements of the Regulation E amendments, which resulted in further reductions to the amount of overdraft fees we were able to collect beginning in July 2011.

Proposed Changes to Regulatory Capital Requirement under Basel III

In June 2012, the federal banking agencies issued a series of proposed rules to conform U.S. regulatory capital rules with the international regulatory standards agreed to by the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision in the accord referred to as “Basel III.” The proposed revisions, if adopted, would establish new higher capital ratio requirements, narrow the definitions of capital, impose new operating restrictions on banking organizations with insufficient capital buffers and increase the risk weighting of certain assets. The proposed new capital requirements would apply to all banks, savings associations, bank holding companies with more than $500 million in assets and all savings and loan holding companies regardless of asset size. It is unclear whether, if, or in what form Basel III will be adopted. A

summary of the proposed regulatory changes is set forth below.

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- *New and Increased Capital Requirements.* The proposed rules would establish a new capital measure called "Common Equity Tier I Capital" consisting of common stock and related surplus, retained earnings, accumulated other comprehensive income and, subject to certain adjustments, minority common equity interests in subsidiaries. Unlike the current rules which exclude unrealized gains and losses on available-for-sale debt securities from regulatory capital, the proposed rules would generally require accumulated other comprehensive income to flow through to regulatory capital. Depository institutions and their holding companies would be required to maintain Common Equity Tier I Capital equal to 4.5% of risk-weighted assets by 2015. Additionally, the proposed regulations would increase the required ratio of Tier I Capital to risk-weighted assets from the current 4% to 6% by 2015. Tier I Capital would consist of Common Equity Tier I Capital plus Additional Tier I Capital which would include non-cumulative perpetual preferred stock. Neither cumulative preferred stock (other than certain preferred stock issued to the U.S. Treasury) nor trust preferred securities would qualify as Additional Tier I Capital but could be included in Tier II Capital along with qualifying subordinated debt. The proposed regulations would also require a minimum Tier I leverage ratio of 4% for all institutions. The minimum required ratio of total capital to risk-weighted assets would remain at 8%.

- *Capital Buffer Requirement.* In addition to increased capital requirements, depository institutions and their holding companies may be required to maintain a capital buffer of at least 2.5% of risk-weighted assets over and above the minimum risk-based capital requirements. Institutions that do not maintain the required capital buffer would be subject to progressively more stringent limitations on the percentage of earnings that can be paid out in dividends or used for stock repurchases and on the payment of discretionary bonuses to senior executive management. The capital buffer requirement would be phased in over a four-year period beginning in 2016. The capital buffer requirement effectively raises the minimum required risk-based capital ratios to 7% Common Equity Tier I Capital, 8.5% Tier I Capital and 10.5% Total Capital on a fully phased-in basis.

- *Changes to Prompt Corrective Action Capital Categories.* The Prompt Corrective Action rules would be amended to incorporate a Common Equity Tier I Capital requirement and to raise the capital requirements for certain capital categories. In order to be adequately capitalized for purposes of the prompt corrective action rules, a banking organization would be required to have at least an 8% Total Risk-Based Capital Ratio, a 6% Tier I Risk-Based Capital Ratio, a 4.5% Common Equity Tier I Risk Based Capital Ratio and a 4% Tier I Leverage Ratio. To be well capitalized, a banking organization would be required to have at least a 10% Total Risk-Based Capital Ratio, an 8% Tier I Risk-Based Capital Ratio, a 6.5% Common Equity Tier I Risk-Based Capital Ratio and a 5% Tier I Leverage Ratio.

- *Additional Deductions from Capital.* Banking organizations would be required to deduct goodwill and certain other intangible assets, net of associated deferred tax liabilities, from Common Equity Tier I Capital. Deferred tax assets arising from temporary timing differences that could not be realized through net operating loss ("NOL") carrybacks would continue to be deducted but deferred tax assets that could be realized through NOL carrybacks would not be deducted but would be subject to 100% risk weighting. Defined benefit pension fund assets, net of any associated deferred tax liability, would be deducted from Common Equity Tier I Capital unless the banking organization has unrestricted and unfettered access to such assets. Reciprocal cross-holdings of capital instruments in any other financial institutions would now be deducted from capital, not just holdings in other depository institutions. For this purpose, financial institutions are broadly defined to include securities and commodities firms, hedge and private equity funds and non-depository lenders. Banking organizations would also be required to deduct non-significant investments (less than 10% of outstanding stock) in other financial institutions to the extent these exceed 10% of Common Equity Tier I Capital subject to a 15% of Common Equity Tier I Capital cap. Greater than 10% investments must be deducted if they exceed 10% of Common Equity Tier I Capital. If the aggregate amount of

certain items excluded from capital deduction due to a 10% threshold exceeds 17.65% of Common Equity Tier I Capital, the excess must be deducted.

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- *Changes in Risk-Weightings.* The proposed rules would apply a 250% risk-weighting to mortgage servicing rights, deferred tax assets that cannot be realized through NOL carrybacks and significant (greater than 10%) investments in other financial institutions. The proposal also would also change the risk-weighting for residential mortgages and would create a new 150% risk-weighting category for "high volatility commercial real estate loans" which are credit facilities for the acquisition, construction or development of real property other than one- to four-family residential properties or commercial real projects where: (i) the loan-to-value ratio is not in excess of interagency real estate lending standards; and (ii) the borrower has contributed capital equal to not less than 15% of the real estate's "as completed" value before the loan was made.

The proposed rules indicated that the final rule would become effective on January 1, 2013, and the changes set forth in the final rules will be phased in from January 1, 2013 through January 1, 2019. However, due to the volume of public comments received, the final rule did not go into effect on January 1, 2013. The ultimate impact of the U.S. implementation of the new capital and liquidity standards on the Company and the Bank is currently being reviewed and is dependent upon the terms of the final regulations, which may differ from the proposed regulations. At this point we cannot determine the ultimate effect that any final regulations, if enacted, would have upon our earnings or financial position.

Neither the Company nor the Bank can predict what other legislation might be enacted or what other regulations or assessments might be adopted.

See "Capital Resources and Shareholders' Equity" under Item 7 below for a discussion of regulatory capital requirements.

Available Information

We maintain a corporate Internet site at www.FirstBancorp.com, which contains a link within the "Investor Relations" section of the site to each of our filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission, including our annual reports on Form 10-K, our quarterly reports on Form 10-Q, our current reports on Form 8-K, and amendments to those reports filed or furnished pursuant to Section 13(a) or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934. These filings are available, free of charge, as soon as reasonably practicable after we electronically file such material with, or furnish it to, the Securities and Exchange Commission. These filings can also be accessed at the Securities and Exchange Commission's website located at www.sec.gov. Information included on our Internet site is not incorporated by reference into this annual report.

Item 1A. Risk Factors

An investment in our common stock involves certain risks. Before you invest in our common stock, you should be aware that there are various risks, including those described below, which could affect the value of your investment in the future. The trading price of our common stock could decline due to any of these risks, and you may lose all or part of your investment. The risk factors described in this section, as well as any cautionary language in this report, provide examples of risks, uncertainties and events that could have a material adverse effect on our business, including our operating results and financial condition. In addition to the risks and uncertainties described below, other risks and uncertainties not currently known to us, or that we currently deem to be immaterial, also may materially or adversely affect our business, financial condition, and results of operations. The value or market price of our common stock could decline due to any of these identified or other unidentified risks.

Difficult market conditions and economic trends have adversely affected our industry and our business.

A general economic downturn began in the latter half of 2007. Dramatic declines in the housing market, with decreasing home prices and increasing delinquencies and foreclosures, negatively impacted the credit performance of mortgage loans, especially land development loans, and resulted in significant write-downs of assets by many financial institutions. In addition, the value of real estate collateral supporting many loans declined and may continue to decline. General downward economic trends, reduced availability of commercial credit and high unemployment rates have negatively impacted the credit performance of commercial and consumer credit, resulting in additional write-downs. While there have been recent signs of recovery in the national economy, the economic conditions in our market area do not seem to have improved at the same rate, if at all. We believe that the economic downtrends are largely responsible for the deterioration in loan quality that we experienced over the past four years, including higher levels of loan charge-offs, higher levels of nonperforming assets, and higher provisions for loan losses. Concerns over the stability of the financial markets and the economy have resulted in decreased lending by financial institutions to their customers and to each other. This market turmoil and tightening of credit has led to increased commercial and consumer delinquencies, lack of confidence, increased market volatility and widespread reduction in general business activity. Financial institutions, including us, have experienced a decrease in access to borrowings. The resulting economic pressure on consumers and businesses and the lack of confidence in the financial markets have adversely affected, and may continue to adversely affect, our business, financial condition, results of operations and stock price.

As a result of the foregoing factors, there is a potential for new federal or state laws and regulations regarding lending and funding practices and liquidity standards, and bank regulatory agencies are expected to be very aggressive in responding to concerns and trends identified in examinations. This increased governmental action may increase our costs and limit our ability to pursue certain business opportunities.

Our ability to assess the creditworthiness of customers and to estimate the losses inherent in our credit exposure is made more complex by these difficult market and economic conditions. A worsening of these conditions would likely exacerbate the adverse effects of these difficult market and economic conditions on us, our customers and the other financial institutions in our market. As a result, we may experience additional increases in foreclosures, delinquencies and customer bankruptcies, as well as more restricted access to funds.

We are vulnerable to the economic conditions within the fairly small geographic region in which we operate.

Like many businesses, our overall success is partially dependent on the economic conditions in the marketplace where we operate. Our marketplace is concentrated in the central Piedmont and coastal regions of North Carolina. These regions continue to experience challenging economic conditions, which we believe is a factor in our increases in borrower delinquencies, nonperforming assets, and loan losses during the past few years. If economic conditions in our marketplace worsen, it would likely have an adverse impact on us. In particular, if economic conditions related to real estate values in our marketplace were to worsen, our loan losses would likely increase. At December 31, 2012, approximately 90% of our loans were secured by real estate collateral, which means that additional decreases in real estate values would have an adverse impact on our operations.

If our goodwill becomes impaired, we may be required to record a significant charge to earnings.

We have goodwill recorded on our balance sheet as an asset with a carrying value as of December 31, 2012 of $65.8 million. Under generally accepted accounting principles, goodwill is required to be tested for impairment at least annually and between annual tests if an event occurs or circumstances change that would more likely than not reduce the fair value of a reporting unit below its carrying amount. The test for goodwill impairment involves comparing the fair value of a company’s reporting units to their respective carrying values. For our company, our community banking operation is our only material reporting unit. The price of our common stock is one of several measures available for estimating the fair value of our community banking operations. During 2010, 2011 and 2012, our common stock consistently traded below the book value of our company. Subject to the results of other valuation techniques, if this situation persists or worsens, this could indicate that our next test of goodwill will result in a determination that there is impairment. We may be required to record a significant charge to earnings in our financial statements during the period in which any impairment of our goodwill is determined, which could have a negative impact on our results of operations.

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We may be subject to more stringent capital requirements.

We are subject to capital adequacy guidelines and other regulatory requirements specifying minimum amounts and types of capital which we must maintain. From time to time, the regulators implement changes to these regulatory capital adequacy guidelines. If we fail to meet these minimum capital guidelines and other regulatory requirements, our financial condition would be materially and adversely affected. In light of proposed changes to regulatory capital requirements contained in the Dodd-Frank Act and the regulatory accords on international banking institutions formulated by the Basel Committee and implemented by the Federal Reserve, we likely will be required to satisfy additional, more stringent, capital adequacy standards. The ultimate impact of the new capital standards on us cannot be determined at this time and will depend on a number of factors, including the treatment and implementation by U.S. banking regulators. These requirements, however, and any other new regulations, could adversely affect our ability to pay dividends, or could require us to reduce business levels or raise capital, including in ways that may adversely affect our financial condition or results of operations.

We might be required to raise additional capital in the future, but that capital may not be available or may not be available on terms acceptable to us when it is needed.

We are required to maintain adequate capital levels to support our operations. In the future, we might need to raise additional capital to support growth, absorb loan losses, or meet more stringent capital requirements. Our ability to raise additional capital will depend on conditions in the capital markets at that time, which are outside our control, and on our financial performance. Accordingly, we cannot be certain of our ability to raise additional capital in the future if needed or on terms acceptable to us. If we cannot raise additional capital when needed, our ability to conduct our business could be materially impaired.

The soundness of other financial institutions could adversely affect us.

Since the middle of 2007, the financial services industry as a whole, have been materially adversely affected by substantial declines in the values of nearly all asset classes and by a significant lack of liquidity. Financial institutions, especially in North Carolina and the rest of the Southeast, have been subject to increased volatility and an overall loss in investor confidence. Our ability to engage in routine funding transactions could be adversely affected by the actions and commercial soundness of other financial institutions. Financial services companies are interrelated as a result of trading, clearing, counterparty or other relationships. We have exposure to many different industries and counterparties, and we routinely execute transactions with counterparties in the financial services industry, including brokers and dealers, commercial banks, and investment banks. Defaults by, or even rumors or questions about, one or more financial services companies, or the financial services industry generally, have led to market-wide liquidity problems and could lead to losses or defaults by us or by other institutions. We can make no assurance that any such losses would not materially and adversely affect our business, financial condition or results of operations.

We are subject to extensive regulation, which could have an adverse effect on our operations.

We are subject to extensive regulation and supervision from the North Carolina Commissioner of Banks, the FDIC, and the Federal Reserve Board. This regulation and supervision is intended primarily for the protection of the FDIC insurance fund and our depositors and borrowers, rather than for holders of our equity securities. In the past, our business has been materially affected by these regulations. This trend is likely to continue in the future.

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Regulatory authorities have extensive discretion in their supervisory and enforcement activities, including the imposition of restrictions on operations, the classification of our assets and the determination of the level of allowance for loan losses. Changes in the regulations that apply to us, or changes in our compliance with regulations, could have a material impact on our operations.

Financial reform legislation enacted by the U.S. Congress, and further changes in regulation to which we are exposed, will result in additional new laws and regulations that are expected to increase our costs of operations.

The Dodd-Frank Act has and will continue to significantly change bank regulatory structure and affect lending, deposit, investment, and operating activities of financial institutions and their holding companies. The Dodd-Frank Act requires various federal agencies to adopt a broad range of new rules and regulations, and to prepare numerous studies and reports for Congress. The federal agencies are given significant discretion in drafting and implementing the rules and regulations, and consequently, many of the details and much of the impact of the Dodd-Frank Act may not be known for many months or years. See “Legislative and Regulatory Developments – Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act of 2010” above for additional information regarding the Dodd-Frank Act.

The Dodd-Frank Act also created the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and gave it broad rule-making authority for a wide range of consumer protection laws that apply to all banks and savings institutions, including the authority to prohibit “unfair, deceptive or abusive” acts and practices. Additionally, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has examination and enforcement authority over all banks and savings institutions with more than $10 billion in assets.

Proposals for further regulation of the financial services industry are continually being introduced in the Congress of the United States of America. The agencies regulating the financial services industry also periodically adopt changes to their regulations. It is possible that additional legislative proposals may be adopted or regulatory changes may be made that would have an adverse effect on our business. In addition, it is expected that such regulatory changes will increase our operating and compliance cost. We can provide no assurance regarding the manner in which new laws and regulations will affect us.

We are subject to interest rate risk, which could negatively impact earnings.

Net interest income is the most significant component of our earnings. Our net interest income results from the difference between the yields we earn on our interest-earning assets, primarily loans and investments, and the rates that we pay on our interest-bearing liabilities, primarily deposits and borrowings. When interest rates change, the yields we earn on our interest-earning assets and the rates we pay on our interest-bearing liabilities do not necessarily move in tandem with each other because of the difference between their maturities and repricing characteristics. This mismatch can negatively impact net interest income if the margin between yields earned and rates paid narrows. Interest rate environment changes can occur at any time and are affected by many factors that are outside our control,

including inflation, recession, unemployment trends, the Federal Reserve's monetary policy, domestic and international disorder and instability in domestic and foreign financial markets.

Our allowance for loan losses may not be adequate to cover actual losses.

Like all financial institutions, we maintain an allowance for loan losses to provide for probable losses caused by customer loan defaults. The allowance for loan losses may not be adequate to cover actual loan losses, and in this case additional and larger provisions for loan losses would be required to replenish the allowance. Provisions for loan losses are a direct charge against income.

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We establish the amount of the allowance for loan losses based on historical loss rates, as well as estimates and assumptions about future events. Because of the extensive use of estimates and assumptions, our actual loan losses could differ, possibly significantly, from our estimate. We believe that our allowance for loan losses is adequate to provide for probable losses, but it is possible that the allowance for loan losses will need to be increased for credit reasons or that regulators will require us to increase this allowance. Either of these occurrences could materially and adversely affect our earnings and profitability.

In the normal course of business, we process large volumes of transactions involving millions of dollars. If our internal controls fail to work as expected, if our systems are used in an unauthorized manner, or if our employees subvert our internal controls, we could experience significant losses.

We process large volumes of transactions on a daily basis and are exposed to numerous types of operational risk. Operational risk includes the risk of fraud by persons inside or outside the Company, the execution of unauthorized transactions by employees, errors relating to transaction processing and systems and breaches of the internal control system and compliance requirements. This risk also includes potential legal actions that could arise as a result of an operational deficiency or as a result of noncompliance with applicable regulatory standards.

We establish and maintain systems of internal operational controls that provide us with timely and accurate information about our level of operational risk. Although not foolproof, these systems have been designed to manage operational risk at appropriate, cost-effective levels. Procedures exist that are designed to ensure that policies relating to conduct, ethics, and business practices are followed. From time to time, losses from operational risk may occur, including the effects of operational errors. We continually monitor and improve our internal controls, data processing systems, and corporate-wide processes and procedures, but there can be no assurance that future losses will not occur.

Negative public opinion regarding our company and the financial services industry in general, could damage our reputation and adversely impact our earnings.

Reputation risk, or the risk to our business, earnings and capital from negative public opinion regarding our company and the financial services industry in general, is inherent in our business. Negative public opinion can result from actual or alleged conduct in any number of activities, including lending practices, corporate governance and acquisitions, and 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 clients and employees and can expose us to litigation and regulatory action. Although we have taken steps to minimize reputation risk in dealing with our clients and communities, this risk will always be present given the nature of our business.

Our reported financial results are impacted by management’s selection of accounting methods and certain assumptions and estimates.

Our accounting policies and methods are fundamental to the way we record and report our financial condition and results of operations. Our management must exercise judgment in selecting and applying many of these accounting policies and methods so they comply with generally accepted accounting principles and reflect management's judgment of the most appropriate manner to report our financial condition and results. In some cases, management must select the accounting policy or method to apply from two or more alternatives, any of which may be reasonable under the circumstances, yet may result in reporting materially different results than would have been reported under a different alternative.

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Certain accounting policies are critical to presenting our financial condition and results. They require management to make difficult, subjective or complex judgments about matters that are uncertain. Materially different amounts could be reported under different conditions or using different assumptions or estimates. These critical accounting policies include: the allowance for loan losses; intangible assets; and the fair value and discount accretion of loans acquired in FDIC-assisted transactions.

There can be no assurance that we will continue to pay cash dividends.

Although we have historically paid cash dividends, there is no assurance that we will continue to pay cash dividends. Future payment of cash dividends, if any, will be at the discretion of our board of directors and will be dependent upon our financial condition, results of operations, capital requirements, economic conditions, and such other factors as the board may deem relevant.

Our business continuity plans or data security systems could prove to be inadequate, resulting in a material interruption in, or disruption to, our business and a negative impact on our results of operations.

We rely heavily on communications and information systems to conduct our business. Our daily operations depend on the operational effectiveness of our technology. We rely on our systems to accurately track and record our assets and liabilities. Any failure, interruption or breach in security of our computer systems or outside technology, due to severe weather, natural disasters, acts of war or terrorism, criminal activity or other factors, could result in failures or disruptions in general ledger, deposit, loan, customer relationship management, and other systems leading to inaccurate financial records. This could materially affect our business operations and financial condition. While we have disaster recovery and other policies and procedures designed to prevent or limit the effect of any failure, interruption or security breach of our information systems, there can be no assurance that any such failures, interruptions, or security breaches will not occur or, if they do occur, that they will be adequately addressed. The occurrence of any failures, interruptions or security breaches of our information systems could damage our reputation, result in a loss of customer business, subject us to additional regulatory scrutiny, or expose us to civil litigation and possible financial liability, any of which could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations.

In addition, the Bank provides its customers the ability to bank online. The secure transmission of confidential information over the Internet is a critical element of online banking. While we use qualified third party vendors to test and audit our network, our network could become vulnerable to unauthorized access, computer viruses, phishing schemes and other security issues. The Bank may be required to spend significant capital and other resources to alleviate problems caused by security breaches or computer viruses. To the extent that the Bank activities or the activities of its customers involve the storage and transmission of confidential information, security breaches and viruses could expose the Bank to claims, litigation, and other potential liabilities. Any inability to prevent security breaches or computer viruses could also cause existing customers to lose confidence in the Bank’s systems and could adversely affect its reputation and its ability to generate deposits.

Our potential inability to integrate companies we may acquire in the future could expose us to financial, execution, and operational risks that could negatively affect our financial condition and results of operations. Acquisitions may be dilutive to common shareholders and FDIC-assisted transactions have additional compliance risk that other acquisitions do not have.

On occasion, we may engage in a strategic acquisition when we believe there is an opportunity to strengthen and expand our business. In addition, such acquisitions may involve the issuance of stock, which may have a dilutive effect on earnings per share. To fully benefit from such acquisition, however, we must integrate the administrative, financial, sales, lending, collections, and marketing functions of the acquired company. If we are unable to successfully integrate an acquired company, we may not realize the benefits of the acquisition, and our financial results may be negatively affected. A completed acquisition may adversely affect our financial condition and results of operations, including our capital requirements and the accounting treatment of the acquisition. Completed acquisitions may also lead to exposure from potential asset quality issues, losses of key employees or customers, difficulty and expense of integrating operations and systems, and significant unexpected liabilities after the consummation of these acquisitions. In addition, if we were to conclude that the value of an acquired business had decreased and that the related goodwill had been impaired, that conclusion would result in a goodwill impairment charge, which would adversely affect our results of operations.

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We may have opportunities to acquire the assets and liabilities of failed banks in FDIC-assisted transactions. Although these transactions typically provide for FDIC assistance to an acquirer to mitigate certain risks, such as sharing exposure to loan losses and providing indemnification against certain liabilities of the failed institution, we are (and would be in future transactions) subject to many of the same risks we would face in acquiring another bank in a negotiated transaction, including risks associated with maintaining customer relationships and failure to realize the anticipated acquisition benefits in the amounts and within the time frames we expect. In addition, ongoing compliance risk under the loss-share agreement with the FDIC is considerable and the event of noncompliance could result in coverage under the loss-share being disallowed, thus increasing the actual losses to the Bank. Our inability to overcome these risks could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations.

Item 1B. Unresolved Staff Comments

None

Item 2. Properties

The main offices of the Company and the Bank are owned by the Bank and are located in a three-story building in the central business district of Troy, North Carolina. The building houses administrative and bank teller facilities. The Bank's Operations Division, including customer accounting functions, offices for information technology operations, and offices for loan operations, are housed in two one-story steel frame buildings approximately one-half mile west of the main office. Both of these buildings are owned by the Bank. The Company operates 97 bank branches. The Company owns all of its bank branch premises except eight branch offices for which the land and buildings are leased and ten branch offices for which the land is leased but the building is owned. The Company also leases two loan production offices. There are no options to purchase or lease additional properties. The Company considers its facilities adequate to meet current needs and believes that lease renewals or replacement properties can be acquired as necessary to meet future needs.

Item 3. Legal Proceedings

Various legal proceedings may arise in the ordinary course of business and may be pending or threatened against the Company and its subsidiaries. However, neither the Company nor any of its subsidiaries is involved in any pending legal proceedings that management believes could have a material effect on the consolidated financial position of the Company. If an exposure were to be identified, it is the Company's policy to establish and accrue appropriate reserves during the accounting period in which a loss is deemed to be probable and the amount is determinable.

There were no tax shelter penalties assessed by the Internal Revenue Service against the Company during the year ended December 31, 2012.

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Item 4. Mine Safety Disclosure

Not applicable.

PART II

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

Our common stock trades on The NASDAQ Global Select Market under the symbol FBNC. Table 22, included in "Management's Discussion and Analysis" below, sets forth the high and low market prices of our common stock as traded by the brokerage firms that maintain a market in our common stock and the dividends declared for the periods indicated. We paid a cash dividend of $0.08 per share for each quarter of 2012. For the foreseeable future, it is our current intention to continue to pay cash dividends of $0.08 per share on a quarterly basis. See "Business - Supervision and Regulation" above and Note 16 to the consolidated financial statements for a discussion of other regulatory restrictions on the Company's payment of dividends. As of December 31, 2012, there were approximately 2,600 shareholders of record and another 3,600 shareholders whose stock is held in "street name."

Other than a private placement of securities that was described in a Form 8-K that we filed on December 26, 2012, there were no sales of unregistered securities during the year ended December 31, 2012.

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Additional Information Regarding the Registrant's Equity Compensation Plans

At December 31, 2012, the Company had three equity-based compensation plans. The Company's 2007 Equity Plan is the only one of the three plans under which new grants of equity-based awards are possible.

The following table presents information as of December 31, 2012 regarding shares of the Company's stock that may be issued pursuant to the Company's equity based compensation plans. At December 31, 2012, the Company had no warrants or stock appreciation rights outstanding under any compensation plans.

	As of December 31, 2012		
	(a)	(b)	(c)
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 available for future issuance under equity compensation plans (excluding securities reflected in column (a))
Equity compensation plans approved by security holders (1)	521,613	$ 17.80	758,731
Equity compensation plans not approved by security holders	—	—	—
Total	521,613	$ 17.80	758,731

(1) Consists of (A) the Company's 2007 Equity Plan, which is currently in effect; (B) the Company's 2004 Stock Option Plan; and (C) the Company's 1994 Stock Option Plan, each of which was approved by our shareholders.

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Performance Graph

The performance graph shown below compares the Company's cumulative total return to shareholders for the five-year period commencing December 31, 2007 and ending December 31, 2012, with the cumulative total return of the Russell 2000 Index (reflecting overall stock market performance of small-capitalization companies), and an index of banks with between $1 billion and $5 billion in assets, as constructed by SNL Securities, LP (reflecting changes in banking industry stocks). The graph and table assume that $100 was invested on December 31, 2007 in each of the Company's common stock, the Russell 2000 Index, and the SNL Bank Index, and that all dividends were reinvested.

First Bancorp

Comparison of Five-Year Total Return Performances (1)

Five Years Ending December 31, 2012

	Total Return Index Values (1) December 31,					
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
First Bancorp	$100.00	101.59	79.05	88.59	66.43	78.64
Russell 2000	100.00	66.21	84.20	106.82	102.36	119.09
SNL Index-Banks between $1 billion and $5 billion	100.00	82.94	59.45	67.39	61.46	75.78

Notes:

(1) Total return indices were provided from an independent source, SNL Securities LP, Charlottesville, Virginia, and assume initial investment of $100 on December 31, 2007, reinvestment of dividends, and changes in market values. Total return index numerical values used in this example are for illustrative purposes only.

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Issuer Purchases of Equity Securities

Pursuant to authorizations by the Company's board of directors, the Company has from time to time repurchased shares of common stock in private transactions and in open-market purchases. The most recent board authorization was announced on July 30, 2004 and authorized the repurchase of 375,000 shares of the Company's stock. The Company did not repurchase any shares of its common stock during the quarter ended December 31, 2012.

Issuer Purchases of Equity Securities

Period	Total Number of Shares Purchased (2)	Average Price Paid Per Share	Total Number of Shares Purchased as Part of Publicly Announced Plans or Programs (1)	Maximum Number of Shares That May Yet Be Purchased Under the Plans or Programs (1)
Month #1 (October 1, 2012 to October 31, 2012)	—	$ —	—	214,241
Month #2 (November 1, 2012 to November 30, 2012)	—	—	—	214,241
Month #3 (December 1, 2012 to December 31, 2012)	—	—	—	214,241
Total	—	$ —	—	214,241

Footnotes to the Above Table

(1) All shares available for repurchase are pursuant to publicly announced share repurchase authorizations. On July 30, 2004, the Company announced that its board of directors had approved the repurchase of 375,000 shares of the Company's common stock. The repurchase authorization does not have an expiration date. There are no plans or programs the Company has determined to terminate prior to expiration, or under which the Company does not intend to make further purchases.

(2) The table above does not include shares that were used by option holders to satisfy the exercise price of the call options issued by the Company to its employees and directors pursuant to the Company's stock option plans. There were no such exercises during the three months ended December 31, 2012.

Item 6. Selected Consolidated Financial Data

Table 1 on page 70 of this report sets forth the selected consolidated financial data for the Company.

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Item 7. Management’s Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations

Management’s Discussion and Analysis is intended to assist readers in understanding our results of operations and changes in financial position for the past three years. This review should be read in conjunction with the consolidated financial statements and accompanying notes beginning on page 89 of this report and the supplemental financial data contained in Tables 1 through 22 included with this discussion and analysis.

Overview - 2012 Compared to 2011

Earnings for 2012 were significantly impacted by charges associated with a loan disposition and foreclosed property write-down that occurred in the fourth quarter of 2012. Additionally, in the first quarter of 2012, we recorded a significant provision for loan losses resulting from an internal review of certain nonperforming loan relationships. Our 2011 results were impacted by a bargain purchase gain and accelerated accretion on our preferred stock discount (see discussion below).

Financial Highlights

($ in thousands except per share data)	2012	2011	Change