

volume transfer agents voluntarily file the notice on occasion with the Federal Reserve. Transfer agents are institutions that provide securities transfer, registration, monitoring, and other specified services on behalf of securities issuers. The purpose of the notice, which is effective until the agent withdraws it, is to claim exemption from certain rules and regulations of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). The Federal Reserve uses the notices for supervisory purposes because the SEC has assigned to the Federal Reserve responsibility for collecting the notices and verifying their accuracy through examinations of the respondents. There is no formal reporting form, and each notice is filed as a letter.

**3. Report title:** Investment in Bank Premises Notification

*Agency form number:* FR 4014

*OMB control number:* 7100-0139

*Frequency:* On occasion

*Reporters:* State member banks

*Annual reporting hours:* 18

*Estimated average hours per response:* 30 minutes

*Number of respondents:* 36

*General description of report:* This information collection is mandatory (12 U.S.C. 371d(a)) and is not given confidential treatment.

*Abstract:* The Federal Reserve System requires a state member bank to seek prior Federal Reserve approval before making an investment in bank premises that exceeds certain thresholds. There is no formal reporting form, and each required request for prior approval must be filed as a notification with the appropriate Reserve Bank of the state member bank. The Federal Reserve uses the information provided in the notice to fulfill its statutory obligation to supervise state member banks.

**4. Report title:** Information Collections Related to the Gramm-Leach-Bliley (GLB) Act

*Agency form number:* FR 4010, FR 4011, FR 4012, FR 4017, FR 4019, and FR 4023

*OMB control number:* 7100-0292

*Frequency:* On occasion

*Reporters:* BHCs, foreign banking organizations (FBOs), and state member banks

*Annual reporting hours:* 2,421 hours

*Estimated average hours per response:* FR 4010: BHC 3 hours, FBOs 3.5 hours; FR 4011: 10 hours; FR 4012: BHCs decertified as financial holding companies (FHCs) 1 hour, FHCs back into compliance 10 hours; FR 4017: 4 hours; FR 4019: 1 hour; FR 4023: 50 hours

*Number of respondents:* FR 4010: BHC 49, FBOs 8; FR 4011: 4; FR 4012:

BHCs decertified as financial holding companies (FHCs) 11, FHCs back into compliance 28; FR 4017: 2; FR 4019: Regulatory relief requests 5, Portfolio company notification 2; FR 4023: 38

*General description of report:* The FR 4010 is required to obtain a benefit and is authorized under Section 4(l)(1)(C) of the BHC Act, 12 U.S.C. § 1843(l)(1)(C); section 8(a) of the International Banking Act, 12 U.S.C. § 3106(a); and sections 225.82 and 225.91 of Regulation Y, 12 C.F.R. 225.82 and 225.91.

The FR 4011 is voluntary and is authorized under Sections 4(j) and 4(k) of the BHC Act, 12 U.S.C. § 1843(j) through (k); and sections 225.88, and 225.89, of Regulation Y, 12 C.F.R. 225.88, and 225.89.

The FR 4012 is mandatory and is authorized under Section 4(l)(1) and 4(m) of the BHC Act, 12 U.S.C. § 1843(l)(1) and (m); section 8(a) of the International Banking Act, 12 U.S.C. § 3106(a); and sections 225.83 and 225.93 of Regulation Y, 12 C.F.R. 225.83 and 225.93.

The FR 4017 is required to obtain a benefit and is authorized under Section 9 of the Federal Reserve Act, 12 U.S.C. § 335; and section 208.76 of Regulation H, 12 C.F.R. 208.76.

The FR 4019 is required to obtain a benefit and is authorized under Section 4(k)(7) of the BHC Act, 12 U.S.C. § 1843(k)(7); and sections 225.171(e)(3), 225.172(b)(4), and 225.173(c)(2) of Regulation Y, 12 C.F.R. 225.171(e)(3), 225.172(b)(4), and 225.173(c)(2).

The FR 4023 is mandatory and is authorized under Section 4(k)(7) of the BHC Act, 12 U.S.C. § 1843(k)(7); and sections 225.171(e)(4) and 225.175 of Regulation Y, 12 C.F.R. 225.171(e)(4) and 225.175.

For the FR 4010, FR 4011, FR 4017, and FR 4019, a company may request confidential treatment of the information contained in these information collections pursuant to section (b)(4) and (b)(6) of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 552 (b)(4) and (b)(6)). Since the Federal Reserve does not collect the FR 4023, no issue of confidentiality under the FOIA arises. FOIA will only be implicated if the Board's examiners retained a copy of the records in their examination or supervision of the institution, and would likely be exempt from disclosure pursuant to FOIA (5 U.S.C. 552(b)(4), (b)(6), and (b)(8)).

*Abstract:* Each BHC or FBO seeking FHC status must file the FR 4010 declaration, which includes information needed to verify eligibility for FHC status. By filing the FR 4011, a requestor may ask the Board to determine that an activity is financial in nature, to issue

an advisory opinion that an activity is within the scope of an activity previously determined to be financial in nature, or to approve engagement in an activity complementary to a financial activity. Any FHC ceasing to meet capital or managerial prerequisites for FHC status must notify the Board by filing the FR 4012 of the deficiency, and often must submit plans to the Board to cure the deficiency. Any state member bank seeking to establish a financial subsidiary must seek the Board's prior approval by submitting the FR 4017. Any FHC seeking to extend the 10-year holding period for a merchant banking investment must submit the FR 4019 to apply for the Board's prior approval, and a FHC also must notify the Board if it routinely manages or operates a portfolio company for more than nine months. All FHCs engaging in merchant banking activities must keep records of those activities, and make them available to examiners as specified in the FR 4023 requirements.

There are no formal reporting forms for these collections of information, which are event generated, though in each case the type of information required to be filed is described in the Board's regulations. These collections of information are required pursuant to amendments made by the GLB Act to the Bank Holding Company Act or the Federal Reserve Act, or Board regulations issued to carry out the GLB Act.

*Current Actions:* On April 2, 2007, the Federal Reserve published a notice in the Federal Register (72 FR 15692) requesting public comment for 60 days on the extension, without revision, of the: FR 4008, FR 4013, FR 4014 and information collections related to the GLB Act: FR 4010, FR 4011, FR 4017, FR 4019, and FR 4023. The comment period for this notice expired on June 1, 2007. No comments were received.

Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, June 12, 2007.

**Robert deV. Frierson,**

*Deputy Secretary of the Board.*

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## FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM

### Formations of, Acquisitions by, and Mergers of Bank Holding Companies

The companies listed in this notice have applied to the Board for approval, pursuant to the Bank Holding Company Act of 1956 (12 U.S.C. 1841 *et seq.*) (BHC Act), Regulation Y (12 CFR Part 225), and all other applicable statutes and regulations to become a bank

holding company and/or to acquire the assets or the ownership of, control of, or the power to vote shares of a bank or bank holding company and all of the banks and nonbanking companies owned by the bank holding company, including the companies listed below.

The applications listed below, as well as other related filings required by the Board, are available for immediate inspection at the Federal Reserve Bank indicated. The application also will be available for inspection at the offices of the Board of Governors. Interested persons may express their views in writing on the standards enumerated in the BHC Act (12 U.S.C. 1842(c)). If the proposal also involves the acquisition of a nonbanking company, the review also includes whether the acquisition of the nonbanking company complies with the standards in section 4 of the BHC Act (12 U.S.C. 1843). Unless otherwise noted, nonbanking activities will be conducted throughout the United States. Additional information on all bank holding companies may be obtained from the National Information Center website at [www.ffiec.gov/nic/](http://www.ffiec.gov/nic/).

Unless otherwise noted, comments regarding each of these applications must be received at the Reserve Bank indicated or the offices of the Board of Governors not later than July 9, 2007.

**A. Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta** (David Tatum, Vice President) 1000 Peachtree Street, N.E., Atlanta, Georgia 30309:

1. *NorthStar Banking Corporation*, to become a bank holding company by acquiring 100 percent of the voting shares of NorthStar Bank (in organization), both of Tampa, Florida.

**B. Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis** (Jacqueline G. King, Community Affairs Officer) 90 Hennepin Avenue, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55480-0291:

1. *Merchants Financial Group, Inc.*, Winona, Minnesota; to acquire 100 percent of the voting shares of Jerema, Inc., and thereby indirectly acquire voting shares of The First National Bank in Cannon Falls, both of Cannon Falls, Minnesota.

Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, June 11, 2007.

**Robert deV. Frierson,**

*Deputy Secretary of the Board.*

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## FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

### No FEAR Act Notice

**AGENCY:** Federal Trade Commission (FTC).

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is providing notice to its employees, former employees, and applicants for federal employment about the rights and remedies available to them under the Federal antidiscrimination, whistleblower protection, and retaliation laws. This notice fulfills the FTC's initial notification obligation under the Notification and Federal Employees Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act (No FEAR Act), as implemented by Office of Personnel Management (OPM) regulations at 5 CFR part 724.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Barbara Wiggs, Director, Office of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), by mail at Federal Trade Commission, Mail Drop H-413, 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20580, or by telephone at (202) 326-2197. Additional information can be found on the FTC's website at <http://www.ftc.gov>.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** On May 15, 2002, Congress enacted the "Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002," which is now known as the No FEAR Act. See Pub. L. 107-174, codified at 5 U.S.C. 2301 note. As stated in the full title of the Act, the Act is intended to "require that Federal agencies be accountable for violations of antidiscrimination and whistleblower protection laws." In support of this purpose, Congress found that "agencies cannot be run effectively if those agencies practice or tolerate discrimination." Pub. L. 107-174, § 101(1).

The Act also requires this agency to provide this notice to its Federal employees, former Federal employees and applicants for Federal employment to inform you of the rights and protections available to you under Federal antidiscrimination, whistleblower protection, and retaliation laws.

### Antidiscrimination Laws

A Federal agency cannot discriminate against an employee or applicant with respect to the terms, conditions or privileges of employment on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, parental status or any other non-merit factor. Discrimination on these bases is prohibited by one or more of the following statutes: 5 U.S.C. 2302(b)(1), 29 U.S.C. 206(d), 29 U.S.C. 631, 29 U.S.C. 633a, 29 U.S.C. 791 and 42 U.S.C. 2000e-16.

If you believe that you have been the victim of unlawful discrimination on

the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin or disability, you must contact an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) counselor within 45 calendar days of the alleged discriminatory action, or, in the case of a personnel action, within 45 calendar days of the effective date of the action, before you can file a formal complaint of discrimination with your agency. See, e.g., 29 CFR part 1614. If you believe that you have been the victim of unlawful discrimination on the basis of age, you must either contact an EEO counselor as noted above or give notice of intent to sue to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) within 180 calendar days of the alleged discriminatory action. If you are alleging discrimination based on marital status or political affiliation, you may file a written complaint with the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) (see contact information below). In the alternative (or in some cases, in addition), you may pursue a discrimination complaint by filing a grievance through your agency's administrative or negotiated grievance procedures, if such procedures apply and are available.

### Whistleblower Protection Laws

A Federal employee with authority to take, direct others to take, recommend or approve any personnel action must not use that authority to take or fail to take, or threaten to take or fail to take, a personnel action against an employee or applicant because of disclosure of information by that individual that is reasonably believed to evidence violations of law, rule or regulation; gross mismanagement; gross waste of funds; an abuse of authority; or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety, unless disclosure of such information is specifically prohibited by law and such information is specifically required by Executive order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or the conduct of foreign affairs.

Retaliation against an employee or applicant for making a protected disclosure is prohibited by 5 U.S.C. 2302(b)(8). If you believe that you have been the victim of whistleblower retaliation, you may file a written complaint (Form OSC-11) with the U.S. Office of Special Counsel at 1730 M Street, NW., Suite 218, Washington, DC 20036-4505 or online through the OSC Web site at <http://www.osc.gov>.

### Retaliation for Engaging in Protected Activity

A Federal agency cannot retaliate against an employee or applicant