

FIRST FINANCIAL BANCORP /OH/
 Form 4
 April 25, 2006

FORM 4

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

OMB APPROVAL

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Check this box if no longer subject to Section 16. Form 4 or Form 5 obligations may continue. See Instruction 1(b).

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP OF SECURITIES

Filed pursuant to Section 16(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, Section 17(a) of the Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935 or Section 30(h) of the Investment Company Act of 1940

(Print or Type Responses)

1. Name and Address of Reporting Person *
 gehlmann gregory a

2. Issuer Name and Ticker or Trading Symbol
 FIRST FINANCIAL BANCORP /OH/ [FFBC]

5. Relationship of Reporting Person(s) to Issuer
 (Check all applicable)

(Last) (First) (Middle)
 300 HIGH STREET
 (Street)

3. Date of Earliest Transaction (Month/Day/Year)
 04/24/2006

____ Director _____ 10% Owner
 Officer (give title below) _____ Other (specify below)
 SVP/Corporate General Counsel

HAMILTON, OH 45013
 (City) (State) (Zip)

4. If Amendment, Date Original Filed(Month/Day/Year)

6. Individual or Joint/Group Filing(Check Applicable Line)
 Form filed by One Reporting Person
 Form filed by More than One Reporting Person

Table I - Non-Derivative Securities Acquired, Disposed of, or Beneficially Owned

| 1. Title of Security (Instr. 3) | 2. Transaction Date (Month/Day/Year) | 2A. Deemed Execution Date, if any (Month/Day/Year) | 3. Transaction Code (Instr. 8) | 4. Securities Acquired (A) or Disposed of (D) (Instr. 3, 4 and 5) | 5. Amount of Securities Beneficially Owned Following Reported Transaction(s) (Instr. 3 and 4) | 6. Ownership Form: Direct (D) or Indirect (I) (Instr. 4) | 7. Nature of Ownership (Instr. 4) |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|---|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| | | | | (A) or (D) Code V Amount (D) Price | | | |
| Common Stock | 04/24/2006 | | A | 2,700 A \$ 0 | 5,000 | I | Restricted |

Reminder: Report on a separate line for each class of securities beneficially owned directly or indirectly.

Persons who respond to the collection of information contained in this form are not required to respond unless the form displays a currently valid OMB control number.

SEC 1474 (9-02)

Table II - Derivative Securities Acquired, Disposed of, or Beneficially Owned (e.g., puts, calls, warrants, options, convertible securities)

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| 1. Title of Derivative Security (Instr. 3) | 2. Conversion or Exercise Price of Derivative Security | 3. Transaction Date (Month/Day/Year) | 3A. Deemed Execution Date, if any (Month/Day/Year) | 4. Transaction Code (Instr. 8) | 5. Number of Derivative Securities Acquired (A) or Disposed of (D) (Instr. 3, 4, and 5) | 6. Date Exercisable and Expiration Date (Month/Day/Year) | 7. Title and Amount of Underlying Securities (Instr. 3 and 4) | | |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|---|--|---|--------------|----------------------------|
| | | | | Code | V (A) (D) | Date Exercisable | Expiration Date | Title | Amount or Number of Shares |
| 2005 (ISO) Stock Option | \$ 18.63 | | | | | 06/21/2006 | 06/21/2016 | Common Stock | 5,367 |
| 2005 (NQ) Stock Option | \$ 18.63 | | | | | 06/21/2006 | 06/21/2016 | Common Stock | 6,033 |
| 2006 (ISO) Stock Option | \$ 16.02 | 04/24/2006 | | A | 6,242 | 04/24/2007 | 04/24/2016 | Common Stock | 6,242 |
| 2006 (NQ) Stock Option | \$ 16.02 | 04/24/2006 | | A | 10,258 | 04/24/2007 | 04/24/2016 | Common Stock | 10,258 |

Reporting Owners

| Reporting Owner Name / Address | Relationships | | | |
|---|---------------|-----------|----------------------------------|-------|
| | Director | 10% Owner | Officer | Other |
| gehlmann gregory a 300 HIGH STREET HAMILTON, OH 45013 | | | SVP/Corporate General Counsel | |

Signatures

terri j ziepfel 04/25/2006

**Signature of Reporting Person

Date

Explanation of Responses:

* If the form is filed by more than one reporting person, see Instruction 4(b)(v).

** Intentional misstatements or omissions of facts constitute Federal Criminal Violations. See 18 U.S.C. 1001 and 15 U.S.C. 78ff(a).

Note: File three copies of this Form, one of which must be manually signed. If space is insufficient, see Instruction 6 for procedure.

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