

FIRST FINANCIAL BANCORP /OH/  
Form 8-K  
April 09, 2019

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

FORM 8-K

CURRENT REPORT  
Pursuant to Section 13 or 15(d) of the  
Securities Exchange Act of 1934

Date of Report (Date of earliest event reported): April 9, 2019

FIRST FINANCIAL BANCORP.  
(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Ohio 31-1042001  
(State or other jurisdiction of (I.R.S. employer  
incorporation or organization) identification number)

Commission file number: 001-34762

255 East Fifth Street, Suite 700, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202  
(Address of principal executive offices and zip code)

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

Check the appropriate box below if the Form 8-K filing is intended to simultaneously satisfy the filing obligation of the registrant under any of the following provisions (see General Instruction A.2. below):

- Written communications pursuant to Rule 425 under the Securities Act (17 CFR 230.425)
- Soliciting material pursuant to Rule 14a-12 under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.14a-12)
- Pre-commencement communications pursuant to Rule 14d-2(b) under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.14d-2(b))
- Pre-commencement communications pursuant to Rule 13e-4(c) under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.13e-4(c))

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is an emerging growth company as defined in as defined in Rule 405 of the Securities Act of 1933 (§230.405 of this chapter) or Rule 12b-2

of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (§240.12b-2 of this chapter).

Emerging growth company

If an emerging growth company, indicate by check mark if the registrant has elected not to use the extended transition period for complying with any new or revised financial accounting standards provided pursuant to Section 13(a) of the Exchange Act.

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First Financial Bancorp.

Item 2.02 Results of Operations and Financial Condition.

First Financial Bancorp. (the "Company") expects its first quarter net income and earnings per share to be adversely affected by a significant charge-off from a single \$16.8 million finance relationship at its subsidiary, First Franchise Capital Corporation. The relationship was placed on non-accrual status during the fourth quarter of 2018. Based on further investigation and certain actions taken by one of the franchisors during the first quarter of 2019, the Company believes that the borrower's assets, consisting of numerous quick-serve franchise stores, have substantially deteriorated.

As a result of this investigation and developments, the Company currently intends to charge off approximately \$10 million related to this credit relationship for the quarter ended March 31, 2019. This charge-off is anticipated to negatively affect the Company's pre-tax earnings by approximately \$10 million and its net income by approximately \$8 million, or approximately \$0.08 per diluted share on an after-tax basis. As a result, the Company expects its GAAP earnings per share to be approximately \$0.47. The Company anticipates earnings per share of approximately \$0.48 when adjusted for non-operating items (primarily merger-related expenses) that we believe are important to understanding our quarterly performance. This adjusted earnings per share represents a return on assets of approximately 1.38%.

The Company is taking action to enforce its rights against the borrower and its collateral, including to preserve and recover the borrower's assets, where appropriate. We also continue to believe that the Company's overall credit performance will remain stable in 2019.

The Company intends to release full results for the quarter ended March 31, 2019 on April 25, 2019. An investor call to discuss the results will be held at 8:30 a.m. on April 26, 2019.

The information set forth in this Current Report on Form 8-K is being furnished to the Securities and Exchange Commission and is not deemed to be "filed" for purposes of Section 18 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the "Exchange Act"), or otherwise subject to the liabilities under the Exchange Act. Such information shall not be incorporated by reference into any registration statement or other document filed under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, or the Exchange Act, except as shall be expressly set forth by specific reference in such filing.

#### Forward-Looking Statements

Certain statements contained in this Current Report which are not statements of historical fact constitute forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Words such as "believes," "anticipates," "likely," "expected," "estimated," "intends" and other similar expressions are intended to identify forward-looking statements but are not the exclusive means of identifying such statements. Examples of forward-looking statements include, but are not limited to, statements we make about (i) our future operating or financial performance, including revenues, income or loss and earnings or loss per share, (ii) future common stock dividends, (iii) our capital structure, including future capital levels, (iv) our plans, objectives and strategies, and (v) the assumptions that underlie our forward-looking statements.

As with any forecast or projection, forward-looking statements are subject to inherent uncertainties, risks and changes in circumstances that may cause actual results to differ materially from those set forth in the forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements are not historical facts but instead express only management's beliefs regarding future results or events, many of which, by their nature, are inherently uncertain and outside of

management's control. It is possible that actual results and outcomes may differ, possibly materially, from the anticipated results or outcomes indicated in these forward-looking statements. Important factors that could cause actual results to differ materially from those in our forward-looking statements include the following, without limitation: (i) economic, market, liquidity, credit, interest rate, operational and technological risks associated with the Company's business; (ii) the effect of and changes in policies and laws or regulatory agencies, including the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act and other legislation and regulation relating to the banking industry; (iii) management's ability to effectively execute its business plans; (iv) mergers and acquisitions, including costs or difficulties related to the integration of acquired companies; (v) the possibility that any of the anticipated benefits of the Company's recent merger with MainSource Financial Group, Inc. will not be realized or will not be

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realized within the expected time period; (vi) the effect of changes in accounting policies and practices; (vii) changes in consumer spending, borrowing and saving and changes in unemployment; (viii) changes in customers' performance and creditworthiness; and (ix) the costs and effects of litigation and of unexpected or adverse outcomes in such litigation. Additional factors that may cause our actual results to differ materially from those described in our forward-looking statements can be found in our Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2018, as well as our other filings with the SEC, which are available on the SEC website at [www.sec.gov](http://www.sec.gov).

All forward-looking statements included in this filing are made as of the date hereof and are based on information available at the time of the filing. Except as required by law, the Company does not assume any obligation to update any forward-looking statement.

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SIGNATURES

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, the registrant has duly caused this report to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned hereunto duly authorized.

FIRST FINANCIAL BANCORP.

By: /s/ James M. Anderson  
James M. Anderson  
Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer

Date: April 9, 2019