

STERLING FINANCIAL CORP /WA/

Form 8-K

July 21, 2009

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): July 20, 2009

STERLING FINANCIAL CORPORATION

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Washington

0-20800

91-1572822

(State or other jurisdiction of incorporation or organization) (Commission File Number) (I.R.S. Employer Identification No.)

111 North Wall Street, Spokane, Washington 99201

(Address of principal executive offices) (Zip Code)

(509) 458-3711

(Registrant's telephone number, including area code)

Not Applicable

(Former Name or Former Address, if Changed Since Last Report)

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:

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))

INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED IN THE REPORT

Item 8.01. Other Events.

On July 20, 2009, Sterling Financial Corporation ("Sterling") issued a press release, announcing that it has filed a universal shelf registration statement on Form S-3 with the Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC"). This registration statement replaces Sterling's prior shelf registration statement, and, subject to regulatory approval and certain other conditions, would increase the amount of money that Sterling may raise under the registration statement from \$100,000,000 to \$500,000,000. A copy of the press release is included as Exhibit 99.1 to this report.

Item 9.01. Financial Statements and Exhibits.

(d) The following exhibit is being filed herewith:

| <u>Exhibit No.</u> | <u>Exhibit Description</u> |
|--------------------|---|
| 99.1 | Text of Sterling Financial Corporation press release. |

SIGNATURE

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 thereunto duly authorized.

STERLING FINANCIAL CORPORATION

(Registrant)

July 20, 2009

By: /s/ Daniel G. Byrne

Date

Daniel G. Byrne

Executive Vice President, Assistant Secretary and
Principal Financial Officer