

**FIRST BANKS, INC.  
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI**

**NEWS RELEASE**

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**Traded:** NYSE

**Symbol:** FBSPrA – (First Preferred Capital Trust IV, an affiliated trust of First Banks, Inc.)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**First Bank Announces Completion of Sale of Chicago Branches**

**St. Louis, Missouri, February 22, 2010.** First Bank, a Missouri state-chartered bank and wholly owned subsidiary of First Banks, Inc. (“First Banks” or the “Company”), headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri, today announced completion of the sale of certain assets and the transfer of certain liabilities of its Chicago franchise to FirstMerit Bank, N.A., a subsidiary of FirstMerit Corporation, headquartered in Akron, Ohio (“FirstMerit”).

Under the terms of the agreement, FirstMerit assumed approximately \$1.20 billion of deposits associated with First Bank’s 24 Chicago retail branches, including certain commercial deposit relationships, for a premium of 3.5%, or approximately \$42.0 million. FirstMerit also purchased over \$300.0 million of loans as well as certain other assets, including premises and equipment, associated with First Bank’s Chicago operations.

Terrance M. McCarthy, President and Chief Executive Officer of First Banks, said, “The sale of our Chicago franchise represents another important part of our capital optimization initiatives and will generate a regulatory capital benefit of approximately \$70.0 million.” Mr. McCarthy continued, “We would like to thank our Chicago based employees for their dedication and hard work and our customers for allowing us the opportunity to serve their business needs. We are confident our customers and employees will be well served by joining the FirstMerit organization as it enters the Chicago market place.”

Hovde Financial, Inc. served as financial adviser and Bryan Cave LLP served as legal adviser to First Bank.

### **About First Banks**

First Banks had assets of \$10.58 billion at December 31, 2009 and currently operates 184 branch banking offices in California, Florida, Illinois, Missouri and Texas. Through its subsidiary bank, First Bank, the Company offers a broad range of financial products and services to consumers, businesses and other institutions. Visit First Banks on the web at [www.firstbanks.com](http://www.firstbanks.com).

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### **Forward-Looking Statements**

*This press release contains forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These statements include, but are not limited to, statements about First Banks' plans, objectives, estimates or projections with respect to our future financial condition, expected or anticipated revenues with respect to our results of operations and our business, expectations and intentions and other statements that are not historical facts. Such statements are based upon the current beliefs and expectations of First Banks' management and are subject to significant risks and uncertainties which may cause actual results to differ materially from those contemplated in the forward-looking statements. The following factors, among others, could cause actual results to differ from those set forth in the forward-looking statements: increased competition and its effect on pricing, spending, third-party relationships and revenues; changes in interest rates and overall economic conditions; and the risk of new and changing regulation. Additional factors which may cause First Banks' results to differ materially from those described in the forward-looking statements may be found in First Banks' Annual Report on Form 10-K and Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q, as filed with the SEC and available at the SEC's internet site. The forward-looking statements in this press release speak only as of the date of the press release, and First Banks does not assume any obligation to update the forward-looking statements or to update the reasons why actual results could differ from those contained in the forward-looking statements.*