

STERLING FINANCIAL CORP /WA/  
Form 8-K  
January 13, 2009  
**UNITED STATES**  
**SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION**

**WASHINGTON, D.C. 20549**

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**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): January 13, 2009

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**STERLING FINANCIAL CORPORATION**  
(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

<b>Washington</b> (State or other jurisdiction of incorporation or organization)	<b>0-20800</b> (Commission File Number)	<b>91-1572822</b> (I.R.S. Employer Identification No.)
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**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))

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**INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED IN THE REPORT**

**Item 2.02. Results of Operations and Financial Condition.**

On January 13, 2009, Sterling Financial Corporation ("Sterling") issued a press release to provide guidance regarding Sterling's fourth quarter earnings results. A copy of release is included as Exhibit 99.1 to this report. The information in this report (including Exhibit 99.1) shall not be deemed to be "filed" for the purposes of Section 18 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the "Exchange Act"), or otherwise subject to the liability of that section, and 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.

**Item 9.01. Financial Statements and Exhibits.**

(d) The following exhibit is being furnished herewith:

Exhibit No.   Exhibit Description

99.1      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)

January 13, 2009

Date

By: /s/ Robert G. Butterfield

**Robert G. Butterfield**

Senior Vice President, Controller and Principal

Accounting Officer

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**EXHIBIT INDEX**

Exhibit No. Exhibit Description

99.1 Sterling Financial Corporation press release.