

STERLING BANCORP  
Form 4  
March 16, 2007

**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 \*  
APPLEBAUM HOWARD M

(Last) (First) (Middle)

650 FIFTH AVENUE, 4TH FLOOR

(Street)

NEW YORK, NY 10019

(City) (State) (Zip)

2. Issuer Name and Ticker or Trading Symbol  
STERLING BANCORP [STL]

3. Date of Earliest Transaction (Month/Day/Year)  
03/14/2007

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

5. Relationship of Reporting Person(s) to Issuer

(Check all applicable)

\_\_\_ Director \_\_\_ 10% Owner  
\_X\_ Officer (give title below) \_\_\_ Other (specify below)

Senior Vice President

6. Individual or Joint/Group Filing(Check Applicable Line)  
\_X\_ 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 Indirect Beneficial Ownership (Instr. 4) |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|---|---|--|---|
|                                 |                                      |  |                                | (A) or (D)  | Price   |  |   |
| Common Stock                    | 03/14/2007                           |  | F                              | D   | \$ 17.81  | D  |   |
| Common Stock                    | 03/14/2007                           |  | M                              | A   | \$ 10.34  | D  |   |
| Common Stock                    |                                      |  |                                |   | 2,662   | I  | By 401(k)   |
| Common Stock                    |                                      |  |                                |   | 6,343   | I  | By IRA  |

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

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(9-02)

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

| 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 Security (Instr. 3 and 4) |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Incentive Stock Options (right to buy)     | \$ 10.34   | 03/14/2007                           |  | M                              | 12,003  | 02/10/1999 02/10/2008                                    | Common Stock  |
| Incentive Stock Option (right to buy)      | \$ 8.69  |                                      |  |                                |   | 02/12/2000 <sup>(1)</sup> 02/12/2009                     | Common Stock  |
| Incentive Stock Options (right to buy)     | \$ 14.6  |                                      |  |                                |   | 02/06/2003 <sup>(1)</sup> 02/06/2012                     | Common Stock  |
| Non-qualified Stock Options (right to buy) | \$ 26.94   |                                      |  |                                |   | 12/19/2005 <sup>(2)</sup> 03/22/2011                     | Common Stock  |

## Reporting Owners

### Reporting Owner Name / Address

### Relationships

APPLEBAUM HOWARD M  
650 FIFTH AVENUE  
4TH FLOOR  
NEW YORK, NY 10019

Director 10% Owner Officer Other

Senior Vice President

## Signatures

/s/ Applebaum,  
Howard M

03/15/2007

\*\*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).

- (1) Options became exercisable in three installments on the first anniversary of the grant, for a term of 10 years from date of grant (first exercisable date listed).

On December 15, 2005 the Board of Directors voted to accelerate the vesting and exercisability of any outstanding unvested and unexercisable non-qualified stock options granted to officers on March 22, 2005 effective as of December 19, 2005; provided, however, that transfer of shares acquired by such exercise is restricted until the date that the option would have been exercisable prior to such change. Such restrictions on transfer will expire as to 10% of the grant on the first anniversary of the date of grant, an additional 15% of the grant on the second anniversary of the date of grant, an additional 25% of the grant on the third anniversary of the date of grant and the remaining 50% of the grant on the fourth anniversary of the grant.

Note: File three copies of this Form, one of which must be manually signed. If space is insufficient, *see* Instruction 6 for procedure. Potential persons who are to respond to the collection of information contained in this form are not required to respond unless the form displays a currently valid OMB number.