

REPUBLIC FIRST BANCORP INC
Form DEFA14A
April 26, 2010

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

SCHEDULE 14A

Proxy Statement Pursuant to Section 14(a) of the
Securities Exchange Act of 1934

Filed by the Registrant [X]
Filed by a Party other than the Registrant []

Check the appropriate box:

- [] Preliminary Proxy Statement
- [] Confidential, for Use of the Commission Only (as permitted by Rule 14a-6(e)(2))
- [] Definitive Proxy Statement
- [X] Definitive Additional Materials
- [] Soliciting Material Pursuant to §240.14a-12

REPUBLIC FIRST BANCORP, INC.

(Name of Registrant as Specified in its Charter)

NOT APPLICABLE

(Name of Person(s) Filing Proxy Statement, if Other Than the Registrant)

Payment of Filing Fee (Check the appropriate box):

- [X] No fee required.
- [] Fee computed on table below per Exchange Act Rules 14a-6(i)(1) and 0-11.

- 1) Title of each class of securities to which transaction applies:
- 2) Aggregate number of securities to which transaction applies:
- 3) Per unit price or other underlying value of transaction computed pursuant to Exchange Act Rule 0-11 (set forth the amount on which the filing fee is calculated and state how it was determined):
- 4) Proposed maximum aggregate value of transaction:
- 5) Total fee paid:

[] Fee paid previously with preliminary materials:

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part of the fee is
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Exchange Act Rule
0-11(a)(2) and
identify the filing for
which the offsetting
fee was paid
previously. Identify
the previous filing
by registration
statement number, or
the Form or
Schedule and the
date of its filing.

1) Amount Previously

Paid:

2) Form, Schedule or Registration Statement No.:

3) Filing

Party:

4) Date

Filed:

As filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on April 23, 2010

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

FORM S-1
REGISTRATION STATEMENT UNDER THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933

REPUBLIC FIRST BANCORP, INC.
(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| Pennsylvania (State or other jurisdiction of incorporation or organization) | 6022 (Primary Standard Industrial Classification Code Number) | 23-2486815 (I.R.S. Employer Identification No.) |
|--|---|---|

50 South 16th Street, Suite 2400
Philadelphia, PA 19102
(215) 735-4422
(Address, including zip code and telephone number, including area code, of Registrant's principal executive offices)

Harry D. Madonna
President and Chief Executive Officer
50 South 16th Street, Suite 2400
Philadelphia, PA 19102
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Approximate date of commencement of proposed sale to the public: As soon as practicable after this registration statement becomes effective.

If any of the securities being registered on this Form are to be offered on a delayed or continuous basis pursuant to Rule 415 under the Securities Act of 1933 check the following box. "

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If this Form is filed to register additional securities for an offering pursuant to Rule 462(b) under the Securities Act, please check the following box and list the Securities Act registration statement number of the earlier effective registration statement for the same offering. "

If this Form is a post-effective amendment filed pursuant to Rule 462(c) under the Securities Act, check the following box and list the Securities Act registration statement number of the earlier effective registration statement for the same offering. "

If this Form is a post-effective amendment filed pursuant to Rule 462(d) under the Securities Act, check the following box and list the Securities Act registration statement number of the earlier effective registration statement for the same offering. "

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, a non-accelerated filer, or a smaller reporting company. See the definitions of "large accelerated filer," "accelerated filer" and "smaller reporting company" in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act.

Large accelerated filer

..

Accelerated filer

Non-accelerated filer " (Do not check if a smaller reporting company)

Smaller reporting company "

Calculation Of Registration Fee

| Title of Each Class of Securities to be Registered | Amount to be Registered | Proposed Maximum Offering Price Per Share | Proposed Maximum Aggregate Offering Price | Amount of Registration Fee |
|--|-------------------------|---|---|----------------------------|
| Common stock | | | \$40,000,000 | \$2,852.00 |

(1) Estimated solely for the purpose of computing the amount of the registration fee pursuant to Rule 457(o) under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended.

(2) Includes shares of common stock that may be purchased by the underwriters to cover over-allotments, if any.

THE REGISTRANT HEREBY AMENDS THIS REGISTRATION STATEMENT ON SUCH DATE OR DATES AS MAY BE NECESSARY TO DELAY ITS EFFECTIVE DATE UNTIL THE REGISTRANT SHALL FILE A FURTHER AMENDMENT WHICH SPECIFICALLY STATES THAT THIS REGISTRATION STATEMENT SHALL THEREAFTER BECOME EFFECTIVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 8(a) OF THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933 OR UNTIL THE REGISTRATION STATEMENT SHALL BECOME EFFECTIVE ON SUCH DATE AS THE COMMISSION, ACTING PURSUANT TO SAID SECTION 8(a), MAY DETERMINE.

SUBJECT TO COMPLETION, DATED April 23, 2010

The information in this prospectus is not complete and may be changed. We may not sell these securities until the registration statement filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission is effective. This prospectus is not an offer to sell these securities and it is not soliciting an offer to buy these securities in any state where the offer or sale is not permitted.

PRELIMINARY PROSPECTUS

Shares

Common Stock

We are offering _____ shares of our common stock, par value \$.01 per share. Of the _____ shares of our common stock we are offering, _____ shares will first be offered to our officers, directors and certain principal shareholders through a directed share subscription program. Any shares not sold through the directed share subscription program will be offered to the general public on the same basis as the other shares offered by this prospectus. Our common stock is listed on the Nasdaq Global Market under the symbol "FRBK." On April 21, 2010, the last reported sale price of our common stock on the Nasdaq Global Market was \$3.96 per share.

The shares of common stock are not deposits or other obligations of any bank or savings association and are not insured or guaranteed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, the Deposit Insurance Fund or any other governmental entity.

Investing in our common stock involves significant risks. See "Risk Factors" beginning on page 8 of this prospectus.

| | Per Share | Total |
|--|-----------|-------|
| Public offering price | \$ | \$ |
| Underwriting discount and commissions (1) | \$ | \$ |
| Proceeds, before expenses, to Republic First Bancorp, Inc. | \$ | \$ |

(1) The underwriting discounts and commissions will be \$ _____ per share. However, the underwriters have agreed that the underwriting discounts and commissions will be \$ _____ per share for sales to our officers, directors and certain principal shareholders under the directed share subscription program. The total underwriting discounts and commissions and the total proceeds to us, before expenses, reflect the reduced discount for sales to our officers, directors and certain principal shareholders under the directed share subscription program.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or passed upon the accuracy or adequacy of this prospectus. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

The underwriters may purchase up to an additional _____ shares of common stock within 30 days of the date of this prospectus to cover over-allotments, if any.

The underwriters expect to deliver the shares of common stock to purchasers on or about _____, 2010.

Sandler O'neill + partners, l.p.

The date of this prospectus is _____, 2010.

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 ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS

You should rely only on the information contained in this prospectus and any permitted free writing prospectuses we have authorized for use with respect to this offering. We have not, and the underwriters are not, authorized anyone to provide you with different or additional information. If anyone provides you with different or additional information, you should not rely on it. We are not, and the underwriters have not, making an offer to sell the securities in any jurisdiction where the offer or sale is not permitted or in which the person making such offer or solicitation is not qualified to do so or to any person to whom it is unlawful to make such offer or solicitation. You should not assume that the information in this prospectus or any permitted free writing prospectus is accurate or complete as of any date other than the dates of the applicable documents. Our business, financial condition, liquidity, results of operations and prospects may have changed since those dates.

It is important for you to read and consider all of the information contained in this prospectus before making your investment decision to purchase shares of our common stock in this offering. See “Where You Can Find More Information” in this prospectus for instructions on how you can access additional information.

Unless the context requires otherwise or unless otherwise noted, all references to the “Company,” “we,” “our,” or “us” refer collectively to Republic First Bancorp, Inc. and its subsidiaries, and all references to the “Bank” or “Republic” refer to our wholly-owned subsidiary, Republic First Bank.

STATEMENT REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

Certain statements included in this prospectus and any prospectus supplement are forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, which we refer to as the Securities Act. All statements other than statements of historical facts contained in this prospectus and any prospectus supplement, including statements regarding our plans, objectives, goals, strategies, future events, capital expenditures, future results, our competitive strengths, our business strategy and the trends in our industry are forward-looking statements. The words “believe,” “may,” “could,” “estimate,” “continue,” “anticipate,” “intend,” “should,” “plan,” “expect,” “likely,” “probably,” “suggest,” “goal,” “potential” and similar expressions, as they relate to us, are intended to identify forward-looking statements. All statements, other than statements of historical fact, included in this prospectus and any prospectus supplement regarding our financial position, business strategy and plans or objectives for future operations are forward-looking statements.

Forward-looking statements are subject to certain risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from those projected in the forward-looking statements. For example, and in addition to the “Risk Factors” discussed elsewhere in this prospectus, risks and uncertainties can arise with changes in:

- general economic conditions, including current turmoil in the financial markets and the efforts of government agencies to stabilize the financial system;
- the adequacy of our allowance for loan losses and our methodology for determining such allowance;
- adverse changes in our loan portfolio and credit risk-related losses and expenses;
- concentrations within our loan portfolio, including our exposure to commercial real estate loans, and to our primary service area;
- changes in interest rates;
- business conditions in the financial services industry, including competitive pressure among financial services companies, new service and product offerings by competitors, price pressures, and similar items;
- deposit flows;
- loan demand;
- the regulatory environment, including evolving banking industry standards, changes in legislation or regulation;
- our securities portfolio and the valuation of our securities;
- changes in accounting principles, policies and guidelines as well as estimates and assumptions used in the preparation of our financial statements;
- rapidly changing technology;
- litigation liabilities, including costs, expenses, settlements and judgments; and
- other economic, competitive, governmental, regulatory and technological factors affecting our operations, pricing, products and services.

Readers are cautioned not to place undue reliance on any forward-looking statement, which reflects management's analysis only as of the date of the statement. Except as required by applicable law or regulation, we do not undertake, and specifically disclaim any obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statements to reflect any changed assumptions, any unanticipated events or any changes in the future.

In addition, you should refer to the “Risk Factors” section of this prospectus beginning on page 8 for a discussion of factors that may cause our actual results to differ materially from those which may be inferred from our forward-looking statements. As a result of these factors, the forward-looking statements in this prospectus and any prospectus supplement will prove to be accurate. Furthermore, if our forward-looking statements prove to be inaccurate, the inaccuracy may be material. In light of the significant uncertainties in these forward-looking statements, you should not regard these statements as a representation or warranty by us or any other person that we will achieve our objectives and plans in any specified time frame, if at all. Accordingly, you should not place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements. All subsequent written and oral forward-looking statements attributable to us or the persons acting on our behalf are expressly qualified in their entirety by the applicable cautionary statements.

PROSPECTUS SUMMARY

The following summary highlights selected information contained in this prospectus. Because it is a summary, it does not contain all the information you should consider before investing in our common stock. Before making any investment decision, you should read the entire prospectus carefully, including the “Risk Factors” section of this prospectus beginning on page 8, and the financial statements and notes to the financial statements beginning on page F-1.

The Company

Republic First Bancorp, Inc. is a corporation incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and a registered bank holding company. We offer a variety of retail and commercial banking services to individuals and businesses throughout the Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey area through our wholly-owned subsidiary, Republic First Bank. As of December 31, 2009, we had approximately \$1.0 billion in total assets, \$694 million in loans, \$883 million in deposits and \$70 million in equity capital. We currently have eleven store locations in Philadelphia, Montgomery and Delaware Counties in Pennsylvania, and one in Camden County, New Jersey, and plan to open additional stores in 2010 and beyond.

Beginning in 2005, our primary objective had been to be an alternative to the large banks for commercial banking services in the Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey area. Since the second quarter of 2008, we began to redirect our strategic efforts toward retail banking and creating a major regional retail and commercial bank with a distinct brand, by focusing on innovation, customer satisfaction, brand building and shareholder value creation. To achieve this transformation, the Bank hired a number of former senior Commerce Bank employees: Andrew Logue, Chief Operations Officer; Rhonda Costello, Chief Retail Officer; Jay Neilon, Chief Credit Officer and Frank Cavallaro, Chief Financial Officer. With this management team in place and additional new employees for support, we believe Republic First Bank has the foundation and commitment to become a leading financial institution in the Philadelphia metropolitan area.

Additionally, the Bank hired two experienced and former Commerce Bank regional market managers, Stephen McWilliams and Robert Worley. Messrs. McWilliams and Worley focus on our commercial lending initiatives and lead the Bank’s lending efforts in the Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey area. They in turn have hired a number of experienced lenders with the same focus and the Bank is beginning to see the results of these teams in many new opportunities for loan and deposit relationships.

In November 2008, we entered into a merger agreement with Metro Bancorp, Inc., then known as Pennsylvania Commerce Bancorp, Inc., which we had hoped would accelerate our strategic plans. Because of uncertainties over regulatory approvals, however, we did not complete that merger. With the termination of the Metro agreement in March 2010, we have re-focused to our strategic plans to develop our franchise as an independent institution. We believe we have a strong management team and adequate capital resources and liquidity to deal with current economic conditions and plan for the future. In connection with the change in strategy to internally grow our brand, we are planning to rebrand our stores and begin operating under the name, “Republic Bank,” the

name under which the Bank was incorporated and under which it did business from 1988 until 1996.

During 2009, we renovated, refurbished and remodeled most of our existing stores, including significant capital improvements, as part of our ongoing efforts to adopt a more retail customer focus and attract additional retail business. We have plans to expand customer services hours, enhance our banking systems to better serve the retail customer, and expand our retail product offerings.

The success of these efforts is already being observed in the growth of our core deposits, which we define as total deposits less public and brokered certificates of deposit. Core deposits have grown by \$217 million, or 43%, for the twelve month period ended December 31, 2009 compared to the same period in 2008. This growth has allowed us to reduce Federal Home Loan Bank advances and short-term borrowings by \$77 million, or 75%, from December 31, 2008, to \$25 million at December 31, 2009, and also reduce brokered deposits by \$112.6 million, or 82%, over the same period. We believe core deposits are the best measure of the deposit gathering strength of our branch network and the success of strategic effort to transform our banking model.

On the lending side, we historically focused efforts on business banking and commercial lending transactions, in particular commercial real estate loans. We have begun to restructure our loan portfolio and deemphasize commercial real estate loans. To further these efforts, during 2009, we undertook detailed reviews of our more significant credit relationships with an emphasis on reducing exposure, enhanced our allowance for loan loss methodology, and committed to originate fewer commercial real estate loans in order to reduce credit concentrations in that loan category. As a result of these initiatives, our commercial real estate portfolio has decreased by \$97.9 million, or 17%, during the twelve month period ended December 31, 2009. This reduction together with deposit growth has reduced the loan to deposit ratio to 77% at December 31, 2009 compared to 105% at December 31, 2008. This will afford the Bank the opportunity to initiate more commercial and industrial and consumer lending.

We continue to believe that an attractive niche exists serving small to medium-sized business customers not adequately served by our larger competitors, and we will continue to seek opportunities to build commercial relationships to complement our retail strategy. We believe small to medium-sized businesses will respond very positively to the attentive and highly personalized service we provide

We are subject to federal and state laws and regulations governing virtually all aspects of our activities, including our lines of business, capital, liquidity, investments, payment of dividends, and others. These laws and regulations and the costs of compliance can have a significant impact on our business, financial condition, and results of operations.

Our principal executive offices are located at Two Liberty Place, 50 South 16th Street, Suite 2400, Philadelphia, PA 19102. Our telephone number is (215) 735-4422 and our website address is www.rfbkonline.com. Information included or referred to on our website is not a part of this prospectus.

Service Area/Market Overview

Our primary service area consists of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey, and we currently have eleven store locations in Philadelphia, Montgomery and Delaware Counties in Pennsylvania, and one in Camden County, New Jersey, to serve this area. Our commercial lending activities extend beyond our primary service area, to include other counties in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, as well as parts of Delaware, Maryland, New York and other out-of-market opportunities.

We will carefully evaluate growth opportunities throughout 2010, as we believe the national and local economies will begin to recover. We have applied to open one new store in 2010 in Haddonfield, New Jersey, which is subject to regulatory approval, and anticipate pursuing additional de novo branching opportunities in our primary service area in 2010 and beyond.

Competition

We face substantial competition from other financial institutions in our service area. Competitors include Wells Fargo, Citizens, PNC, Sovereign, TD Bank and Bank of America, as well as local commercial banks. In addition, we compete directly with savings banks, savings and loan associations, finance companies, credit unions, factors, mortgage brokers, insurance companies, securities brokerage firms, mutual funds, money market funds, private lenders and other institutions for deposits, commercial loans, mortgages and consumer loans, as well as other services. Competition among financial institutions is based upon a number of factors, including the quality of services rendered, interest rates offered on deposit accounts, interest rates charged on loans and other credit services, service charges, the convenience of banking facilities, locations and hours of operation and, in the case of loans to larger commercial borrowers, applicable lending limits. Many of the financial institutions with which we compete have greater financial resources than we do, and offer a wider range of deposit and lending products.

Credit Risk and Asset Quality

As a commercial lender, we are subject to credit risk and recent economic and financial conditions have adversely effected our borrowers and our business. To manage this challenging environment, we

have adopted a more conservative loan classification system, enhanced our allowance for loan loss methodology, and undertaken a comprehensive review of our loan portfolio. Although we follow established underwriting policies, and monitor loans through our loan review program, we remain subject to credit risk. Although the majority of our loan portfolio is collateralized with real estate or other collateral, a portion of the loan portfolio is unsecured.

We have been impacted by the challenging conditions in the economy and financial markets. Since mid-2008, like many other commercial lenders, we have experienced significant charge-offs, provisions for loan losses, and increased non-performing loans and other real estate owned, and continue to manage a significant amount of non-performing assets. We do, however, believe that the markets that we serve and the local economy are showing signs of stabilizing and during 2009 we instituted a vigilant credit administration process in which we reviewed over 40% of our loan portfolio and will continue to review our loan portfolio on a quarterly basis in order to closely monitor our borrowers.

Products and Services

We offer a range of competitively priced banking products and services, including consumer and commercial deposit accounts, including checking accounts, interest-bearing demand accounts, money market accounts, certificates of deposit, savings accounts, sweep accounts, lockbox services and individual retirement accounts (and other traditional banking services), secured and unsecured commercial loans, real estate loans, construction and land development loans, automobile loans, home improvement loans, mortgages, home equity and overdraft lines of credit, and other products. We attempt to offer a high level of personalized service to both our retail and commercial customers.

Risk Factors

Investing in our securities involves risks. You should carefully consider the information under “Risk Factors” beginning on page 8 before investing in our securities.

