

STERLING FINANCIAL CORP /WA/  
Form 3  
November 24, 2010

**FORM 3 UNITED STATES SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION**  
Washington, D.C. 20549

OMB APPROVAL

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**INITIAL STATEMENT OF 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 *			2. Date of Event Requiring Statement		3. Issuer Name <b>and</b> Ticker or Trading Symbol	
^ Thomas H. Lee Equity Fund VI, L.P.  (Last) (First) (Middle)			(Month/Day/Year) 08/26/2010		STERLING FINANCIAL CORP /WA/ [STSA]	
C/O THOMAS H. LEE PARTNERS, L.P., ^ 100 FEDERAL STREET, 35TH FLOOR  (Street)			4. Relationship of Reporting Person(s) to Issuer  (Check all applicable)		5. If Amendment, Date Original Filed(Month/Day/Year)	
BOSTON, ^ MA ^ 02110  (City) (State) (Zip)			___ Director ___X___ 10% Owner ___ Officer ___ Other (give title below) (specify below)		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 Beneficially Owned**

1. Title of Security (Instr. 4)	2. Amount of Securities Beneficially Owned (Instr. 4)	3. Ownership Form: Direct (D) or Indirect (I) (Instr. 5)	4. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership (Instr. 5)
Common Stock	470,908,524	D	^

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

SEC 1473 (7-02)

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

1. Title of Derivative Security	2. Date Exercisable and Expiration Date	3. Title and Amount of Securities Underlying	4. Conversion	5. Ownership	6. Nature of Indirect Beneficial
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(Instr. 4)	(Month/Day/Year)		Derivative Security (Instr. 4)		or Exercise Price of Derivative Security	Form of Derivative Security: Direct (D) or Indirect (I) (Instr. 5)	Ownership (Instr. 5)
	Date Exercisable	Expiration Date	Title	Amount or Number of Shares			
Warrant	10/21/2010	08/26/2017	Common Stock	47,734,495 <u>(1)</u>	\$ 0.22	D	Â

## Reporting Owners

Reporting Owner Name / Address	Relationships			
	Director	10% Owner	Officer	Other
Thomas H. Lee Equity Fund VI, L.P. C/O THOMAS H. LEE PARTNERS, L.P. 100 FEDERAL STREET, 35TH FLOOR BOSTON, MA 02110	Â	Â X	Â	Â

## Signatures

/s/ Charles P. Holden, Managing Director 11/22/2010

Signature of Reporting Person

Date

## Explanation of Responses:

\* If the form is filed by more than one reporting person, see Instruction 5(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) Pursuant to the Warrant Agreement, for valued received, Thomas H. Lee Equity Fund VI, L.P., Thomas H. Lee Parallel Fund VI, L.P. and Thomas H. Lee Equity Parallel (DT) Fund VI, L.P., its Affiliates or its registered assigns (the "Warranholders") is entitled, subject to adjustments for certain issuances of common stock, stock splits, stock subdivisions, stock reclassifications, stock combinations, other distributions, certain repurchases, business combinations and similar actions, to acquire from the Company, in whole or in part, up to an aggregate of 86,625,000 fully paid and non-assessable shares of common stock. The Warranholders have agreed that the warrants will be allocated pro-rata based on the amount of common stock owned in the Corporation.

Note: File three copies of this Form, one of which must be manually signed. If space is insufficient, See Instruction 6 for procedure.

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