

WINTRUST FINANCIAL CORP

Form 425

November 17, 2004

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

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): November 17, 2004

WINTRUST FINANCIAL CORPORATION

(Exact Name of Registrant as Specified in its Charter)

Commission File Number 0-21923

Illinois

36-3873352

(State or other Jurisdiction of Incorporation)

(I.R.S. Employer Identification No.)

727 North Bank Lane
Lake Forest, Illinois 60045

(Address of Principal Executive Offices)

(847) 615-4096

(Registrant's Telephone Number, Including Area Code)

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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Item 8.01. Other Events.

On November 17, 2004, Wintrust Financial Corporation announced that it has signed a definitive agreement to acquire First Northwest Bancorp, Inc., parent company of First Northwest Bank, in a cash and stock merger transaction. Attached as Exhibit 99.1 is a copy of the press release relating to the announcement, which is incorporated herein by reference.

Item 9.01 (c). Exhibits.

Exhibit 99.1 Press Release dated November 17, 2004.

SIGNATURES

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.

WINTRUST FINANCIAL CORPORATION
(Registrant)

Date: November 17, 2004

/s/ David L. Stoehr
David L. Stoehr
Executive Vice President &
Chief Financial Officer

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Exhibit

99.1 Press release dated November 17, 2004.

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