

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

FORM 4

Statement of changes in beneficial ownership of securities

Filing Date: **2006-01-05** | Period of Report: **2006-01-03**
SEC Accession No. **0001209191-06-001835**

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ISSUER

AMERUS GROUP CO/IA

CIK: **1051717** | IRS No.: **421458424** | State of Incorporation: **IA** | Fiscal Year End: **1231**
SIC: **6311** Life insurance

Business Address
699 WALNUT STREET
DES MOINES IA 50309
5153623600

REPORTING OWNER

WITTERN F A JR

CIK: **1233361** | State of Incorporation: **TX** | Fiscal Year End: **1231**
Type: **4** | Act: **34** | File No.: **001-15166** | Film No.: **06511631**

Mailing Address
699 WALNUT STREET
SUITE 2000
DES MOINES IA 50309

Business Address
5153623600

FORM 4

UNITED STATES SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Washington, D.C. 20549

OMB APPROVAL

OMB Number: 3235-0287
 Expires: 02/28/2011
 Estimated average burden
 hours per response 0.5

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STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP

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

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------|----------|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| 1. Name and Address of Reporting Person WITTERN F A JR | | | 2. Issuer Name and Ticker or Trading Symbol AMERUS GROUP CO/IA [AMH] | | | 5. Relationship of Reporting Person(s) to Issuer (Check all applicable) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Director <input type="checkbox"/> 10% Owner <input type="checkbox"/> Officer (give title below) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify below) | | |
| (Last) | (First) | (Middle) | 3. Date of Earliest Transaction (Month/Day/Year) 01/03/2006 | | | 6. Individual or Joint/Group Filing (Check applicable line) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Form Filed by One Reporting Person <input type="checkbox"/> Form Filed by More than One Reporting Person | | |
| 699 WALNUT STREET, SUITE 2000 | | | 4. If Amendment, Date Original Filed(Month/Day/Year) | | | | | |
| (Street) DES MOINES, IA 50309 | | | | | | | | |
| (City) | (State) | (Zip) | | | | | | |

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) |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|---|---|------------|-------|---|--|---|
| | | | Code | V | Amount | (A) or (D) | Price | | | |
| Common Stock | 01/03/2006 | 01/03/2006 | A | | 306 | A | \$ 0 | 8,778 | D | |
| Common Stock | | | | | | | | 500 | I | By Spouse |

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 Securities Underlying Derivative Security (Instr. 3 and 4) | 8. Price of Derivative Security (Instr. 5) | 9. Number of Derivative Securities Beneficially Owned Following Reported Transaction(s) (Instr. 4) | 10. Ownership Form of Derivative Security: Direct (D) or Indirect (I) (Instr. 4) | 11. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership (Instr. 4) | |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|---|---|--|------------|---|--|--|--|--|------------------|
| | | | | Code | V | | (A) | (D) | | | | | | Date Exercisable |
| Non-Qualified Option (Right to Buy) | \$56.61 | 01/03/2006 | 01/03/2006 | A | | 3,500 | (I) | 01/03/2016 | Common Stock | 3,500 | \$ 0 | 3,500 | D | |

Explanation of Responses:

1. Grant of option exempt under Rule 16b-3. The option becomes exercisable in increments as follows: 1,167 on 01/03/2007; 1,166 on 01/03/2008; and 1,167 on 01/03/2009.

Signatures

/s/ Jeananne M. Celander, attorney-in-fact for Mr. Wittern

** Signature of Reporting Person

01/05/2006

Date

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

* 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).

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

Persons who respond to the collection of information contained in this form are not required to respond unless the form displays a currently valid OMB Number.