

Grensteiner Ronald James  
 Form 3  
 July 20, 2009

**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)

|  |   |  |  |   |   |
|--|---|--|--|---|---|
| <p>1. Name and Address of Reporting Person *</p> <p>Â Grensteiner Ronald James</p> <p>(Last) (First) (Middle)</p> <p>5000 WESTOWN PARKWAY</p> <p>(Street)</p> <p>WEST DES MOINES, Â IA Â 50265</p> <p>(City) (State) (Zip)</p> | <p>2. Date of Event Requiring Statement</p> <p>(Month/Day/Year)</p> <p>07/08/2009</p> | <p>3. Issuer Name and Ticker or Trading Symbol</p> <p>AMERICAN EQUITY INVESTMENT LIFE HOLDING CO [AEL]</p> | <p>4. Relationship of Reporting Person(s) to Issuer</p> <p>(Check all applicable)</p> <p>___ Director ___ 10% Owner<br/>                 ___X___ Officer ___ Other<br/>                 (give title below) (specify below)</p> <p>Vice President</p> | <p>5. If Amendment, Date Original Filed(Month/Day/Year)</p> | <p>6. Individual or Joint/Group Filing(Check Applicable Line)</p> <p>___X___ Form filed by One Reporting Person<br/>                 ___ Form filed by More than One Reporting Person</p> |
|--|---|--|--|---|---|

**Table I - Non-Derivative Securities Beneficially Owned**

| 1. Title of Security<br>(Instr. 4) | 2. Amount of Securities Beneficially Owned<br>(Instr. 4) | 3. Ownership Form:<br>Direct (D)<br>or Indirect (I)<br>(Instr. 5) | 4. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership<br>(Instr. 5) |
|------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Common Stock                       | 49,589   | D   | Â  |

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<br>(Instr. 4) | 2. Date Exercisable and Expiration Date<br>(Month/Day/Year) | 3. Title and Amount of Securities Underlying Derivative Security<br>(Instr. 4) | 4. Conversion or Exercise Price of Derivative Security | 5. Ownership Form of Derivative Security:<br>Direct (D)<br>or Indirect | 6. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership<br>(Instr. 5) |
|---|---|--|--|--|--|
|   | Date Exercisable      Expiration Date                       | Title      Amount or Number of   |  |  |  |

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|                       |            |            |              | Shares |          | (I)<br>(Instr. 5) |   |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|--------------|--------|----------|-------------------|---|
| Options-Right to Buy  | 05/05/2000 | 05/05/2010 | Common Stock | 15,000 | \$ 9.67  | D                 | Â |
| Options-Right to Buy  | 12/31/2000 | 12/31/2010 | Common Stock | 30,000 | \$ 9.67  | D                 | Â |
| Options-Right to Buy  | 12/04/2003 | 12/04/2013 | Common Stock | 15,000 | \$ 9     | D                 | Â |
| Options-Right to Buy  | 06/10/2004 | 06/10/2014 | Common Stock | 15,000 | \$ 11    | D                 | Â |
| Options-Right to Buy  | 06/30/2005 | 12/31/2014 | Common Stock | 7,500  | \$ 10.77 | D                 | Â |
| Options-Right to Buy  | 06/11/2011 | 06/11/2018 | Common Stock | 10,000 | \$ 10.85 | D                 | Â |
| Options-Right to Buy  | 05/08/2012 | 05/08/2019 | Common Stock | 20,000 | \$ 7     | D                 | Â |
| Deferred Compensation | Â (1)      | Â (1)      | Common Stock | 4,500  | \$ 5.33  | D                 | Â |

## Reporting Owners

| Reporting Owner Name / Address  | Relationships |           |                  |       |
|---|---------------|-----------|------------------|-------|
|   | Director      | 10% Owner | Officer          | Other |
| Grensteiner Ronald James<br>5000 WESTOWN PARKWAY<br>WEST DES MOINES, IA 50265 | Â             | Â         | Â Vice President | Â     |

## Signatures

Debra J. Richardson, By Power of Attorney  
07/20/2009

\_\_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) Deferred Compensation payment is exercisable within 60 days after the occurrence of the earliest of the following events: (i) employee's termination of employment; (ii) a change in control of company; (iii) action of the Board of Directors; (iv) employee's death

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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