

CENTERPOINT ENERGY RESOURCES CORP

Form S-3ASR

September 30, 2010

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**As filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on September 30, 2010**

**Registration Nos. 333-  
333-  
333-**

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

**Form S-3  
REGISTRATION STATEMENT  
Under  
THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933**

**CenterPoint Energy, Inc.**

*(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)*

**1111 Louisiana  
Houston, Texas 77002  
(713) 207-1111**

*(Address, including zip code, and  
telephone  
number, including area code, of  
registrant's principal executive  
offices)*

**74-0694415**  
*(I.R.S. Employer  
Identification No.)*

**Texas**  
*(State or other jurisdiction of  
incorporation or organization)*

**CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric, LLC**  
*(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)*

**1111 Louisiana  
Houston, Texas 77002  
(713) 207-1111**

*(Address, including zip code, and  
telephone  
number, including area code, of  
registrant's principal executive  
offices)*

**22-3865106**  
*(I.R.S. Employer  
Identification No.)*

**Texas**  
*(State or other jurisdiction of  
incorporation or organization)*

**CenterPoint Energy Resources Corp.**  
*(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)*

**Delaware**  
*(State or other jurisdiction of  
incorporation or organization)*

**1111 Louisiana  
Houston, Texas 77002  
(713) 207-1111**  
*(Address, including zip code, and  
telephone  
number, including area code, of  
registrant's principal executive  
offices)*

**76-0511406**  
*(I.R.S. Employer  
Identification No.)*

**Rufus S. Scott**  
**Senior Vice President, Deputy General Counsel and Assistant Corporate Secretary**  
**1111 Louisiana  
Houston, Texas 77002  
(713) 207-1111**  
*(Name, address, including zip code, and telephone number, including area code, of agent for service)*

***Copies to:***

**Gerald M. Spedale**  
**Baker Botts L.L.P.**  
**910 Louisiana**  
**3000 One Shell Plaza**  
**Houston, Texas 77002-4995**  
**(713) 229-1234**

**Steven R. Loeshelle**  
**Dewey & LeBoeuf LLP**  
**1301 Avenue of the Americas**  
**New York, New York 10019-6092**  
**(212) 259-8000**

**Approximate date of commencement of proposed sale to the public:** From time to time after the effective date of this registration statement.

If the only securities being registered on this form are being offered pursuant to dividend or interest reinvestment plans, please check the following box:

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, other than securities offered only in connection with dividend or interest reinvestment plans, check the following box:

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.

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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 registration statement pursuant to General Instruction I.D. or a post-effective amendment thereto that shall become effective upon filing with the Commission pursuant to Rule 462(e) under the Securities Act, check the following box.

If this Form is a post-effective amendment to a registration statement filed pursuant to General Instruction I.D. filed to register additional securities or additional classes of securities pursuant to Rule 413(b) under the Securities Act, check the following box.

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.

CenterPoint Energy, Inc.

|   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| Large accelerated<br>filer <input type="checkbox"/> | Accelerated filer <input type="radio"/> | Non-accelerated filer <input type="radio"/> | Smaller reporting<br>company <input type="radio"/> |
| (Do not check if a smaller reporting company)       |   |   |  |

CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric, LLC

|  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| Large accelerated<br>filer <input type="radio"/> | Accelerated filer <input type="radio"/> | Non-accelerated filer <input type="checkbox"/> | Smaller reporting<br>company <input type="radio"/> |
| (Do not check if a smaller reporting company)    |   |  |  |

CenterPoint Energy Resources Corp.

|  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| Large accelerated<br>filer <input type="radio"/> | Accelerated filer <input type="radio"/> | Non-accelerated filer <input type="checkbox"/> | Smaller reporting<br>company <input type="radio"/> |
| (Do not check if a smaller reporting company)    |   |  |  |

**CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE**

| Title of Each Class<br>of Securities to be Registered | Amount to be<br>Registered(1) | Proposed<br>Maximum Aggregate<br>Offering Price | Amount of<br>Registration Fee(2) |
|---|-------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| <b>CenterPoint Energy, Inc.</b>                       |                               |   |                                  |
| <b>(CenterPoint Energy)</b>                           |                               |   |                                  |
| Senior Debt Securities                                |                               |   |                                  |
| Junior Subordinated Debt Securities                   |                               |   |                                  |
| Common Stock, \$0.01 par value(3)                     |                               |   |                                  |
| Preferred Stock, \$0.01 par value                     |                               |   |                                  |

Stock Purchase Contracts

Equity Units

**CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric,  
LLC (CenterPoint Houston)**

General Mortgage Bonds

**CenterPoint Energy Resources Corp.  
(CERC Corp.)**

Senior Debt Securities

- (1) There are being registered under this registration statement such indeterminate number of shares of common stock and preferred stock, such indeterminate principal amount of debt securities, which may be senior or junior subordinated, and such indeterminate number of stock purchase contracts and equity units of CenterPoint Energy, such indeterminate principal amount of general mortgage bonds of CenterPoint Houston and such indeterminate principal amount of senior debt securities of CERC Corp. as may from time to time be offered at indeterminate prices and as may be issuable upon the conversion, redemption, exchange or exercise or settlement of any securities registered hereunder, including under any applicable anti-dilution provisions. Any securities registered under this registration statement may be sold separately or as units with other securities registered under this registration statement.
  - (2) In accordance with Rule 456(b) and Rule 457(r), the registrants are deferring payment of the registration fee required in connection with this Registration Statement except for (a) \$17,573 that remains under the Registration Statement on Form S-3 (Registration No. 333-153916) of CenterPoint Energy and CenterPoint Houston initially filed with the Commission on October 9, 2008 (the Prior CenterPoint Energy Registration Statement ) (such amount having previously been paid by CenterPoint Energy in connection with its Registration Statement on Form S-3 (Registration No. 333-116246) initially filed with the Commission on June 7, 2004) and (b) \$19,650 that has previously been paid by CERC Corp. in connection with its Registration Statement on Form S-3 (Registration No. 333-153052) initially filed on August 15, 2008 (the Prior CERC Registration Statement ), for a total offset of \$37,223. In accordance with Rule 415(a)(6), the effectiveness of this Registration Statement will be deemed to terminate the Prior CenterPoint Energy Registration Statement and the Prior CERC Registration Statement.
  - (3) Each share of common stock of CenterPoint Energy includes one preferred share purchase right. No separate consideration is payable for the preferred share purchase rights.
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**Explanatory Note**

This registration statement contains the following three base prospectuses for use in connection with separate offerings by the respective companies.

1. A base prospectus for use by CenterPoint Energy, Inc. ( CenterPoint Energy ) in connection with the offer and sale from time to time of its common stock, preferred stock, debt securities, which may be senior or junior subordinated, stock purchase contracts and equity units.
2. A base prospectus for use by CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric, LLC ( CenterPoint Houston ) in connection with the offer and sale from time to time of its general mortgage bonds. CenterPoint Houston is an indirect wholly owned subsidiary of CenterPoint Energy.
3. A base prospectus for use by CenterPoint Energy Resources Corp. ( CERC Corp. ) in connection with the offer and sale from time to time of its senior debt securities. CERC Corp. is an indirect wholly owned subsidiary of CenterPoint Energy.

Each offering of securities made under this registration statement will be made by the respective company pursuant to the prospectus applicable to its securities, with the specific terms of the securities offered thereby set forth in a prospectus supplement.

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**PROSPECTUS**

**CenterPoint Energy, Inc.**  
**1111 Louisiana**  
**Houston, Texas 77002**  
**(713) 207-1111**

**CENTERPOINT ENERGY, INC.**

**SENIOR DEBT SECURITIES**  
**JUNIOR SUBORDINATED DEBT SECURITIES**  
**COMMON STOCK**  
**PREFERRED STOCK**  
**STOCK PURCHASE CONTRACTS**  
**EQUITY UNITS**

We will provide additional terms of our securities in one or more supplements to this prospectus. You should read this prospectus and the related prospectus supplement carefully before you invest in our securities. No person may use this prospectus to offer and sell our securities unless a prospectus supplement accompanies this prospectus.

**The Offering**

We may offer from time to time:

- senior debt securities;
- junior subordinated debt securities;
- common stock;
- preferred stock;
- stock purchase contracts; and
- equity units.

Our common stock is listed on the New York Stock Exchange and the Chicago Stock Exchange under the symbol CNP.

**Investing in our securities involves risks. See Risk Factors on page 2 of this prospectus.**

**Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or determined if this prospectus is truthful or complete. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.**

The date of this prospectus is September 30, 2010.

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**ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS**

This prospectus is part of a registration statement we have filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) using a shelf registration process. Using this process, we may offer any combination of the securities described in this prospectus in one or more offerings. This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities we may offer. Each time we use this prospectus to offer securities, we will file a supplement to this prospectus with the SEC that will describe the specific terms of the offering. The prospectus supplement may also add to, update or change the information contained in this prospectus. Before you invest, you should carefully read this prospectus, the applicable prospectus supplement and the information contained in the documents we refer to under the heading "Where You Can Find More Information."

**You should rely only on the information contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus, any prospectus supplement and any communication from us or any underwriter specifying the final terms of a particular offering. We have not authorized anyone to provide you with different information. We are not making an offer of these securities in any jurisdiction where the offer is not permitted. You should not assume that the information contained in this prospectus, any prospectus supplement or any communication from us or any underwriter specifying the final terms of a particular offering is accurate as of any date other than the date on the front of that document. Any information we have incorporated by reference is accurate only as of the date of the document incorporated by reference.**

The Bank of New York Mellon Trust Company, National Association, in each of its capacities referenced herein, including, but not limited to, trustee, purchase contract agent, collateral agent, custodial agent, securities intermediary and paying agent, has not participated in the preparation of this prospectus and assumes no responsibility for its content.

**WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION**

We file annual, quarterly and current reports and other information with the SEC. You may read and copy any document we file with the SEC at the SEC's public reference room located at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549. You may obtain further information regarding the operation of the SEC's public reference room by calling the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330. Our filings are also available to the public on the SEC's Internet site located at <http://www.sec.gov>. You can obtain information about us at the offices of the New York Stock Exchange, 20 Broad Street, New York, New York 10005.

This prospectus, which includes information incorporated by reference (see "Incorporation by Reference" below), is part of a registration statement we have filed with the SEC relating to the securities we may offer. As permitted by SEC rules, this prospectus does not contain all of the information we have included in the registration statement and the accompanying exhibits and schedules we file with the SEC. You may refer to the registration statement, the exhibits and the schedules for more information about us and our securities. The registration statement, exhibits and schedules are available at the SEC's public reference room or through its Internet site.

**INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE**

We are incorporating by reference into this prospectus certain information we file with the SEC. This means we are disclosing important information to you by referring you to the documents containing the information. The information we incorporate by reference is considered to be part of this prospectus. Information that we file later with the SEC that is deemed incorporated by reference into this prospectus (but not information deemed pursuant to the

SEC's rules to be furnished to and not filed with the SEC) will automatically update and supersede information previously included.

We are incorporating by reference into this prospectus the documents listed below and any subsequent filings we make with the SEC under Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934

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(excluding information deemed pursuant to the SEC's rules to be furnished and not filed with the SEC) until all the securities are sold:

our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2009,

our Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q for the periods ended March 31, 2010 and June 30, 2010,

our Current Reports on Form 8-K filed on January 26, 2010, February 9, 2010, March 26, 2010, April 28, 2010, June 8, 2010 and June 15, 2010, and

the description of our common stock (including the related preferred share purchase rights) contained in our Current Report on Form 8-K filed on June 8, 2010, as we may update that description from time to time.

You may also obtain a copy of our filings with the SEC at no cost by writing to or telephoning us at the following address:

CenterPoint Energy, Inc.  
Attn: Investor Relations  
P.O. Box 4567  
Houston, Texas 77210-4567  
(713) 207-6500

**ABOUT CENTERPOINT ENERGY, INC.**

We are a public utility holding company. Our operating subsidiaries own and operate electric transmission and distribution facilities, natural gas distribution facilities, interstate pipelines and natural gas gathering, processing and treating facilities. As of the date of this prospectus, our principal indirect wholly owned subsidiaries include:

CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric, LLC (CenterPoint Houston), which engages in the electric transmission and distribution business in a 5,000-square mile area of the Texas Gulf Coast that includes the city of Houston, and

CenterPoint Energy Resources Corp. (CERC Corp.), which owns and operates natural gas distribution systems in six states. Subsidiaries of CERC Corp. own interstate natural gas pipelines and gas gathering systems and provide various ancillary services. A wholly owned subsidiary of CERC Corp. offers variable and fixed-price physical natural gas supplies primarily to commercial and industrial customers and electric and gas utilities.

Our principal executive offices are located at 1111 Louisiana, Houston, Texas 77002 (telephone number: (713) 207-1111).

**RISK FACTORS**

Our businesses are influenced by many factors that are difficult to predict and that involve uncertainties that may materially affect actual operating results, cash flows and financial condition. These risk factors include those described as such in the documents that are incorporated by reference in this prospectus (which risk factors are incorporated herein by reference), and could include additional uncertainties not presently known to us or that we currently do not consider material. Before making an investment decision, you should carefully consider these risks as well as any other information we include or incorporate by reference in this prospectus or include in any applicable prospectus supplement.

**CAUTIONARY STATEMENT REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING INFORMATION**

In this prospectus, including the information we incorporate by reference, we make statements concerning our expectations, beliefs, plans, objectives, goals, strategies, future events or performance and underlying

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assumptions and other statements that are not historical facts. These statements are forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Actual results may differ materially from those expressed or implied by these statements. You can generally identify our forward-looking statements by the words anticipate, believe, continue, could, estimate, expect, forecast, goal, intend, may, objective, projection, should, will or other similar words. We use the terms we and our in this section to mean CenterPoint Energy, Inc. and its subsidiaries.

We have based our forward-looking statements on our management's beliefs and assumptions based on information available to our management at the time the statements are made. We caution you that assumptions, beliefs, expectations, intentions and projections about future events may and often do vary materially from actual results. Therefore, we cannot assure you that actual results will not differ materially from those expressed or implied by our forward-looking statements.

The following are some of the factors that could cause actual results to differ materially from those expressed or implied in forward-looking statements:

the resolution of CenterPoint Houston's true-up proceedings, including, in particular, the results of appeals to the Texas Supreme Court regarding rulings obtained to date,

state and federal legislative and regulatory actions or developments relating to the environment, including those related to global climate change,

other state and federal legislative and regulatory actions or developments affecting various aspects of our business, including, among others, energy deregulation or re-regulation, health care reform and financial reform,

timely and appropriate rate actions and increases, allowing recovery of costs and a reasonable return on investment, including, without limitation, the outcome of the application to change rates submitted to the Public Utility Commission of Texas by CenterPoint Houston in June 2010,

the timing and outcome of any audits, disputes and other proceedings related to taxes,

problems with construction, implementation of necessary technology or other issues with respect to major capital projects that result in delays or in cost overruns that cannot be recouped in rates,

industrial, commercial and residential growth in our service territory and changes in market demand, including the effects of energy efficiency measures, and demographic patterns,

the timing and extent of changes in commodity prices, particularly natural gas and natural gas liquids,

the timing and extent of changes in the supply of natural gas, including supplies available for gathering by our field services business and transport by our interstate pipelines,

the timing and extent of changes in natural gas basis differentials,

weather variations and other natural phenomena,

the impact of unplanned facility outages,

timely and appropriate regulatory actions allowing securitization or other recovery of costs associated with any future hurricanes or natural disasters,

changes in interest rates or rates of inflation,

commercial bank and financial market conditions, our access to capital, the cost of such capital, and the results of our financing and refinancing efforts, including availability of funds in the debt capital markets,

actions by rating agencies,

effectiveness of our risk management activities,

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inability of various counterparties to meet their obligations to us,

non-payment for our services due to financial distress of our customers,

the ability of RRI Energy, Inc. (formerly known as Reliant Energy, Inc. and Reliant Resources, Inc.) and its subsidiaries to satisfy their obligations to us, including indemnity obligations, or in connection with the contractual arrangements pursuant to which we are their guarantor,

the ability of retail electric providers, and particularly the two largest customers of CenterPoint Houston, which are subsidiaries of NRG Retail LLC and TXU Energy Retail Company LLC, to satisfy their obligations to us and our subsidiaries,

the outcome of litigation brought by or against us,

our ability to control costs,

the investment performance of our pension and postretirement benefit plans,

our potential business strategies, including restructurings, acquisitions or dispositions of assets or businesses, which we cannot assure will be completed or will have the anticipated benefits to us,

acquisition and merger activities involving us or our competitors, and

other factors we discuss in Risk Factors in Item 1A of Part II of our Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2010 and other reports we file from time to time with the SEC that are incorporated by reference.

You should not place undue reliance on forward-looking statements. Each forward-looking statement speaks only as of the date of the particular statement.

**RATIOS OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES AND RATIOS OF EARNINGS TO COMBINED FIXED CHARGES AND PREFERRED STOCK DIVIDENDS**

The following table sets forth our ratios of earnings to fixed charges for each of the periods indicated. The ratios were calculated pursuant to applicable rules of the SEC.

|                                    |      | Year Ended December 31, |      |      |      |          | Six Months Ended |
|------------------------------------|------|-------------------------|------|------|------|----------|------------------|
|                                    | 2005 | 2006                    | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | June 30, |                  |
|                                    |      |                         |      |      |      | 2010     |                  |
| Ratio of earnings to fixed charges | 1.49 | 1.74                    | 1.82 | 2.05 | 1.80 | 2.05(1)  |                  |

(1) We do not believe that the ratio for the six-month period is necessarily indicative of the ratios for the twelve-month periods due to the seasonal nature of our business.



We had no preferred stock outstanding for any period presented in the table above and, accordingly, our ratios of earnings to combined fixed charges and preferred stock dividends are the same as our ratios of earnings to fixed charges.

#### **USE OF PROCEEDS**

Unless we inform you otherwise in the prospectus supplement, we anticipate using any net proceeds from the sale of our securities offered by this prospectus for general corporate purposes. These purposes may include, but are not limited to:

working capital,

capital expenditures,

acquisitions,

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the repayment or refinancing of debt, and

loans or advances to subsidiaries.

Pending any specific application, we may initially invest funds in short-term marketable securities or apply them to the reduction of short-term indebtedness, commercial paper or debt under our revolving credit facility.

**DESCRIPTION OF OUR DEBT SECURITIES**

The debt securities offered by this prospectus will be CenterPoint Energy's general unsecured obligations. CenterPoint Energy will issue senior debt securities ( senior debt securities ) under an indenture, dated as of May 19, 2003, between CenterPoint Energy and The Bank of New York Mellon Trust Company, National Association (successor in trust to JPMorgan Chase Bank), as trustee (as supplemented from time to time, the senior indenture ) and junior subordinated debt securities ( junior subordinated debt securities ) under a separate indenture to be entered into between us and The Bank of New York Mellon Trust Company, National Association, as trustee (as supplemented from time to time, the junior subordinated indenture ). We will refer to the senior indenture and the junior subordinated indenture together as the indentures, and each as an indenture. The indentures will be substantially identical, except for provisions relating to subordination and covenants. We have incorporated by reference the senior indenture and a form of the junior subordinated indenture as exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part. We have summarized selected provisions of the indentures and the debt securities below. This summary is not complete and is qualified in its entirety by reference to the indentures. References to section numbers in this description of our debt securities, unless otherwise indicated, are references to section numbers of the indentures.

You should carefully read the summary below, the applicable prospectus supplement and the provisions of the applicable indenture that may be important to you before investing in our senior debt securities or junior subordinated debt securities.

**Provisions Applicable to Each Indenture**

*General.* We may issue debt securities from time to time in one or more series under the applicable indenture. There is no limitation on the amount of debt securities we may issue under either indenture. We will describe the particular terms of each series of debt securities we offer in a supplement to this prospectus. The terms of our debt securities will include those set forth in the applicable indenture and those made a part of such indenture by the Trust Indenture Act of 1939 (Trust Indenture Act).

Subject to the exceptions, and subject to compliance with the applicable requirements set forth in the applicable indenture, we may discharge our obligations under the indentures with respect to our debt securities as described below under Defeasance.

*Terms.* We will describe the specific terms of the series of debt securities being offered in a supplement to this prospectus. These terms will include some or all of the following:

the title of the debt securities,

whether the debt securities are senior debt securities or junior subordinated debt securities,

any limit on the total principal amount of the debt securities,

the date or dates on which the principal of the debt securities will be payable or the method used to determine or extend those dates,

any interest rate on the debt securities, any date from which interest will accrue, any interest payment dates and regular record dates for interest payments, or the method used to determine any of the foregoing, the basis for calculating interest if other than a 360-day year of twelve 30-day months and any right to extend or defer interest payments and the duration of such extension or deferral,

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the place or places where payments on the debt securities will be payable, the debt securities may be presented for registration of transfer or exchange, and notices and demands to or upon us relating to the debt securities may be made,

any provisions that would allow or obligate us to redeem or purchase the debt securities prior to their maturity,

the denominations in which we will issue the debt securities, if other than denominations of an integral multiple of \$1,000,

any provisions that would determine payments on the debt securities by reference to an index or a formula,

any foreign currency, currencies or currency units in which payments on the debt securities will be payable and the manner for determining the equivalent amount in \$U.S.,

any provisions for payments on the debt securities in one or more currencies or currency units other than those in which the debt securities are stated to be payable,

the percentage of the principal amount at which the debt securities will be issued and the portion of the principal amount of the debt securities that will be payable if the maturity of the debt securities is accelerated, if other than the entire principal amount,

if the principal amount to be paid at the stated maturity of the debt securities is not determinable as of one or more dates prior to the stated maturity, the amount that will be deemed to be the principal amount as of any such date for any purpose,

any variation of the defeasance and covenant defeasance sections of the applicable indenture and the manner in which our election to defease the debt securities will be evidenced, if other than by a board resolution,

whether we will issue the debt securities in the form of temporary or permanent global securities, the depositories for the global securities, and provisions for exchanging or transferring the global securities,

whether the interest rate of the debt securities may be reset,

whether the stated maturity of the debt securities may be extended,

any addition to or change in the events of default for the debt securities and any change in the right of the trustee or the holders of the debt securities to declare the principal amount of the debt securities due and payable,

any addition to or change in the covenants in the applicable indenture,

any additions or changes to the applicable indenture necessary to issue the debt securities in bearer form, registrable or not registrable as to principal, and with or without interest coupons,

the appointment of any paying agents for the debt securities, if other than the trustee,

the terms of any right to convert or exchange the debt securities into any other securities or property,

the terms and conditions, if any, pursuant to which the debt securities are secured,

any restriction or condition on the transferability of the debt securities,

with respect to the junior subordinated indenture, any changes to the subordination provisions for the junior subordinated debt securities, and

any other terms of the debt securities consistent with the applicable indenture. (Section 301)

Any limit on the maximum total principal amount for any series of the debt securities may be increased by resolution of our board of directors. We may sell the debt securities, including original issue discount securities, at a substantial discount below their stated principal amount. If there are any special United States

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federal income tax considerations applicable to debt securities we sell at an original issue discount, we will describe them in the prospectus supplement. In addition, we will describe in the prospectus supplement any special United States federal income tax considerations and any other special considerations for any debt securities we sell which are denominated in a currency or currency unit other than U.S. dollars.

*Form, Exchange and Transfer.* We will issue the debt securities in registered form, without coupons. Unless we inform you otherwise in the prospectus supplement, we will only issue debt securities in denominations of integral multiples of \$1,000. (Section 302)

Holders generally will be able to exchange debt securities for other debt securities of the same series with the same total principal amount and the same terms but in different authorized denominations. (Section 305)

Holders may present debt securities for exchange or for registration of transfer at the office of the security registrar or at the office of any transfer agent we designate for that purpose. The security registrar or designated transfer agent will exchange or transfer the debt securities if it is satisfied with the documents of title and identity of the person making the request. We will not charge a service charge for any exchange or registration of transfer of debt securities. However, we may require payment of a sum sufficient to cover any tax or other governmental charge payable for the registration of transfer or exchange. Unless we inform you otherwise in the prospectus supplement, we will appoint the trustee as security registrar. We will identify any transfer agent in addition to the security registrar in the prospectus supplement. (Section 305) At any time we may:

designate additional transfer agents,

rescind the designation of any transfer agent, or

approve a change in the office of any transfer agent.

However, we are required to maintain a transfer agent in each place of payment for the debt securities at all times. (Sections 305 and 1002)

If we elect to redeem a series of debt securities, neither we nor the trustee will be required:

to issue, register the transfer of or exchange any debt securities of that series during the period beginning at the opening of business 15 days before the day we mail the notice of redemption for the series and ending at the close of business on the day the notice is mailed, or

to register the transfer or exchange of any debt security of that series if we have selected the series for redemption, in whole or in part, except for the unredeemed portion of the series. (Section 305)

*Book-entry.* We may issue the debt securities of a series in the form of one or more global debt securities that would be deposited with a depository or its nominee identified in the prospectus supplement. We may issue global debt securities in either temporary or permanent form. We will describe in the prospectus supplement the terms of any depository arrangement and the rights and limitations of owners of beneficial interests in any global debt security.

*Payment and Paying Agents.* Under both indentures, we will pay interest on the debt securities to the persons in whose names the debt securities are registered at the close of business on the regular record date for each interest payment. However, unless we inform you otherwise in the prospectus supplement, we will pay the interest payable on the debt securities at their stated maturity to the persons to whom we pay the principal amount of the debt securities. The initial payment of interest on any series of debt securities issued between a regular record date and the related

interest payment date will be payable in the manner provided by the terms of the series, which we will describe in the prospectus supplement. (Section 307)

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Unless we inform you otherwise in the prospectus supplement, we will pay principal, premium, if any, and interest on the debt securities at the offices of the paying agents we designate. However, except in the case of a global security, we may pay interest by:

check mailed to the address of the person entitled to the payment as it appears in the security register, or

by wire transfer in immediately available funds to the place and account designated in writing by the person entitled to the payment as specified in the security register.

We will designate the trustee as the sole paying agent for the debt securities unless we inform you otherwise in the prospectus supplement. If we initially designate any other paying agents for a series of debt securities, we will identify them in the prospectus supplement. At any time, we may designate additional paying agents or rescind the designation of any paying agents. However, we are required to maintain a paying agent in each place of payment for the debt securities at all times. (Sections 307 and 1002)

Any money deposited with the trustee or any paying agent for the payment of principal, premium, if any, and interest on the debt securities that remains unclaimed for two years after the date the payments became due, may be repaid to us upon our request. After we have been repaid, holders entitled to those payments may only look to us for payment as our unsecured general creditors. The trustee and any paying agents will not be liable for those payments after we have been repaid. (Section 1003)

*Restrictive Covenants.* We will describe any restrictive covenants for any series of debt securities in the prospectus supplement.

*Consolidation, Merger and Sale of Assets.* Under both indentures, we may not consolidate with or merge into, or convey, transfer or lease our properties and assets substantially as an entirety to, any person, referred to as a successor person unless:

the successor person is a corporation, partnership, trust or other entity organized and validly existing under the laws of the United States of America or any state thereof or the District of Columbia,

the successor person expressly assumes our obligations with respect to the debt securities and the applicable indenture,

immediately after giving effect to the transaction, no event of default, and no event which, after notice or lapse of time or both, would become an event of default, would occur and be continuing, and

we have delivered to the trustee the certificates and opinions required under the applicable indenture.  
(Section 801)

As used in the indenture, the term corporation means a corporation, association, company, limited liability company, joint-stock company or business trust.

*Events of Default.* Unless we inform you otherwise in the prospectus supplement, each of the following will be an event of default under each indenture for a series of debt securities:

our failure to pay principal or premium, if any, on that series when due, including at maturity or upon redemption or acceleration,



our failure to pay any interest on that series for 30 days after the interest becomes due,

our failure to deposit any sinking fund payment, when due, relating to that series,

our failure to perform, or our breach in any material respect of, any other covenant or warranty in the applicable indenture, other than a covenant or warranty included in such indenture solely for the benefit of another series of debt securities, for 90 days after either the trustee or holders of at least 25% in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series have given us written notice of the breach in the manner required by the applicable indenture,

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specified events involving our bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization, and

any other event of default we may provide for that series,

provided, however, that no event described in the fourth bullet point above will be an event of default until an officer of the trustee, assigned to and working in the trustee's corporate trust department, has actual knowledge of the event or until the trustee receives written notice of the event at its corporate trust office. (Section 501)

If an event of default for a series of debt securities occurs and is continuing, either the trustee or the holders of at least 25% in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series may declare the principal amount of all the debt securities of that series due and immediately payable. In order to declare the principal amount of that series of debt securities due and immediately payable, the trustee or the holders must deliver a notice that satisfies the requirements of the applicable indenture. Upon a declaration by the trustee or the holders, we will be obligated to pay the principal amount of the series of debt securities.

The right described in the preceding paragraph does not apply if an event of default described in the fifth bullet point above occurs, or an event of default described in the sixth bullet point above that applies to all outstanding debt securities under the applicable indenture occurs. If one of the events of default described in the fifth bullet point above occurs with respect to the debt securities of any series, the debt securities of that series then outstanding under the applicable indenture will be due and payable immediately. If any of the events of default described in the sixth bullet point above that apply to all outstanding debt securities under an indenture occurs and is continuing, either the trustee or holders of at least 25% in principal amount of all of the debt securities then outstanding under the applicable indenture, treated as one class, may declare the principal amount of all of the debt securities then outstanding under such indenture to be due and payable immediately. In order to declare the principal amount of the debt securities due and immediately payable, the trustee or the holders must deliver a notice that satisfies the requirements of the applicable indenture. Upon a declaration by the trustee or the holders, we will be obligated to pay the principal amount of the debt securities.

However, after any declaration of acceleration of a series of debt securities, but before a judgment or decree for payment has been obtained, the event of default giving rise to the declaration of acceleration will, without further act, be deemed to have been waived, and such declaration and its consequences will, without further act, be deemed to have been rescinded and annulled if:

we have paid or deposited with the trustee a sum sufficient to pay:

all overdue interest,

the principal and premium, if any, due otherwise than by the declaration of acceleration and any interest on such amounts,

any interest on overdue interest, to the extent legally permitted, and

all amounts due to the trustee under the applicable indenture, and

all events of default with respect to that series of debt securities, other than the nonpayment of the principal which became due solely by virtue of the declaration of acceleration, have been cured or waived. (Section 502)

If an event of default occurs and is continuing, the trustee will generally have no obligation to exercise any of its rights or powers under the applicable indenture at the request or direction of any of the holders, unless the holders offer reasonable indemnity to the trustee. (Section 603) The holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series will generally have the right to direct the

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time, method and place of conducting any proceeding for any remedy available to the trustee or exercising any trust or power conferred on the trustee for the debt securities of that series, provided that:

the direction is not in conflict with any law or the applicable indenture,

the trustee may take any other action it deems proper which is not inconsistent with the direction, and

the trustee will have the right to decline to follow the direction if an officer of the trustee determines, in good faith, that the proceeding would involve the trustee in personal liability or would otherwise be contrary to applicable law. (Section 512)

A holder of a debt security of any series may only pursue a remedy under the applicable indenture if:

the holder gives the trustee written notice of a continuing event of default for that series,

holders of at least 25% in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series make a written request to the trustee to institute proceedings with respect to the event of default,

the holders offer reasonable indemnity to the trustee,

the trustee fails to pursue that remedy within 60 days after receipt of the notice, request and offer of indemnity, and

during that 60-day period, the holders of a majority in principal amount of the debt securities of that series do not give the trustee a direction inconsistent with the request. (Section 507)

However, these limitations do not apply to a suit by a holder of a debt security demanding payment of the principal, premium, if any, or interest on a debt security on or after the date the payment is due. (Section 508)

We will be required to furnish to the trustee annually a statement by some of our officers regarding our performance or observance of any of the terms of the applicable indenture and specifying all of our known defaults, if any. (Section 1004)

*Modification and Waiver.* We may enter into one or more supplemental indentures to either indenture with the trustee without the consent of the holders of the debt securities in order to:

evidence the succession of another corporation to us, or successive successions and the assumption of our covenants, agreements and obligations by a successor,

add to our covenants for the benefit of the holders of any series of debt securities or to surrender any of our rights or powers,

add events of default for any series of debt securities,

add to or change any provision of the applicable indenture to the extent necessary to issue debt securities in bearer form,

add to, change or eliminate any provision of the applicable indenture applying to one or more series of debt securities, including, for the junior subordinated indenture, the subordination provisions, provided that if such

action adversely affects the interests of any holder of any series of debt securities issued thereunder, the addition, change or elimination will become effective with respect to that series only when no security of that series remains outstanding,

convey, transfer, assign, mortgage or pledge any property to or with the trustee or to surrender any right or power conferred upon us by the applicable indenture,

establish the form or terms of any series of debt securities,

provide for uncertificated securities in addition to certificated securities,

evidence and provide for successor trustees or to add to or change any provisions to the extent necessary to appoint a separate trustee or trustees for a specific series of debt securities,

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correct any ambiguity, defect or inconsistency under the applicable indenture, provided that such action does not adversely affect the interests of the holders of any series of debt securities issued thereunder,

supplement any provisions of the applicable indenture necessary to defease and discharge any series of debt securities, provided that such action does not adversely affect the interests of the holders of any series of debt securities issued thereunder,

comply with the rules or regulations of any securities exchange or automated quotation system on which any debt securities are listed or traded, or

add, change or eliminate any provisions of the applicable indenture in accordance with any amendments to the Trust Indenture Act, provided that the action does not adversely affect the rights or interests of any holder of debt securities issued thereunder. (Section 901)

We may enter into one or more supplemental indentures to either indenture with the trustee in order to add to, change or eliminate provisions of such indenture or to modify the rights of the holders of one or more series of debt securities if we obtain the consent of the holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of each series affected by the supplemental indenture, treated as one class. However, without the consent of the holders of each outstanding debt security affected by the supplemental indenture, we may not enter into a supplemental indenture that:

changes the stated maturity of the principal of, or any installment of principal of or interest on, any debt security, except to the extent permitted by the applicable indenture,

reduces the principal amount of, or any premium or interest on, any debt security,

reduces the amount of principal of an original issue discount security or any other debt security payable upon acceleration of the maturity thereof,

changes the place or currency of payment of principal, premium, if any, or interest,

impairs the right to institute suit for the enforcement of any payment on any debt security,

reduces the percentage in principal amount of outstanding debt securities of any series, the consent of whose holders is required for modification of the applicable indenture, for waiver of compliance with certain provisions of such indenture or for waiver of certain defaults,

makes certain modifications to the provisions for modification of the applicable indenture and for certain waivers, except to increase the principal amount of debt securities necessary to consent to any such charge,

in the case of the junior subordinated indenture, modifies the subordination provisions in a manner adverse to the holders of the junior subordinated debt securities,

makes any change that adversely affects the right to convert or exchange any debt security or decreases the conversion or exchange rate or increases the conversion price of any convertible or exchangeable debt security, or

changes the terms and conditions pursuant to which any series of debt securities is secured in a manner adverse to the holders of the debt securities. (Section 902)

In addition, we may not modify the subordination provisions of any outstanding junior subordinated debt securities without the consent of each holder of our senior debt that would be adversely affected thereby. The term senior debt is defined below under Provisions Applicable Solely to Junior Subordinated Debt Securities Subordination.

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Holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series may waive past defaults or noncompliance with restrictive provisions of the applicable indenture with respect to such series. However, the consent of holders of each outstanding debt security of a series is required to:

waive any default in the payment of principal, premium, if any, or interest, or

waive any covenants and provisions of the applicable indenture that may not be amended without the consent of the holder of each outstanding debt security of the series affected. (Sections 513 and 1006)

In order to determine whether the holders of the requisite principal amount of the outstanding debt securities have taken an action under the applicable indenture as of a specified date:

the principal amount of an original issue discount security that will be deemed to be outstanding will be the amount of the principal that would be due and payable as of that date upon acceleration of the maturity to that date,

if, as of that date, the principal amount payable at the stated maturity of a debt security is not determinable, for example, because it is based on an index, the principal amount of the debt security deemed to be outstanding as of that date will be an amount determined in the manner prescribed for the debt security,

the principal amount of a debt security denominated in one or more foreign currencies or currency units that will be deemed to be outstanding will be the U.S. dollar equivalent, determined as of that date in the manner prescribed for the debt security, of the principal amount of the debt security or, in the case of a debt security described in the two preceding bullet points, of the amount described above, and

debt securities owned by us or any other obligor upon the debt securities or any of our or their affiliates will be disregarded and deemed not to be outstanding.

An original issue discount security means a debt security issued under either indenture which provides for an amount less than the principal amount thereof to be due and payable upon a declaration of acceleration of maturity. Some debt securities, including those for the payment or redemption of which money has been deposited or set aside in trust for the holders and those that have been fully defeased pursuant to Section 1402 of both indentures, will not be deemed to be outstanding. (Section 101)

We will generally be entitled to set any day as a record date for determining the holders of outstanding debt securities of any series entitled to give or take any direction, notice, consent, waiver or other action under the applicable indenture. In limited circumstances, the trustee will be entitled to set a record date for action by holders of outstanding debt securities. If a record date is set for any action to be taken by holders of a particular series, the action may be taken only by persons who are holders of outstanding debt securities of that series on the record date. To be effective, the action must be taken by holders of the requisite principal amount of debt securities within a specified period following the record date. For any particular record date, this period will be 180 days or such shorter period as we may specify, or the trustee may specify, if it set the record date. (Section 104)

*Satisfaction and Discharge.* We may discharge our obligations under either indenture while debt securities remain outstanding if (1) all outstanding debt securities issued under the applicable indenture have become due and payable, (2) all outstanding debt securities issued under the applicable indenture will become due and payable at their scheduled maturity within one year, or (3) all outstanding debt securities issued under the applicable indenture are scheduled for redemption in one year, and in each case, we have deposited with the trustee an amount sufficient to pay and discharge all outstanding debt securities issued under the applicable indenture on the date of their scheduled



maturity or the scheduled date of redemption and we have paid all other sums payable under the applicable indenture.

*Defeasance.* When we use the term defeasance, we mean discharge from some or all of our obligations under either indenture. Unless we inform you otherwise in the prospectus supplement, if we deposit with the

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trustee funds or government securities sufficient to make payments on the debt securities of a series on the dates those payments are due and payable, then, at our option, either of the following will occur:

we will be discharged from our obligations with respect to the debt securities of that series ( legal defeasance ), or

we will no longer have any obligation to comply with the restrictive covenants under the applicable indenture, and the related events of default will no longer apply to us, but some of our other obligations under the indenture and the debt securities of that series, including our obligation to make payments on those debt securities, will survive.

If we effect legal defeasance of a series of debt securities, the holders of the debt securities of the series affected will not be entitled to the benefits of the applicable indenture, except for our obligations to:

register the transfer or exchange of debt securities,

replace mutilated, destroyed, lost or stolen debt securities, and

maintain paying agencies and hold moneys for payment in trust.

Unless we inform you otherwise in the prospectus supplement, we will be required to deliver to the trustee an opinion of counsel that the deposit and related defeasance would not cause the holders of the debt securities to recognize gain or loss for federal income tax purposes and that the holders would be subject to federal income tax on the same amounts, in the same manner and at the same times as would have been the case if the deposit and related defeasance had not occurred. If we elect legal defeasance, that opinion of counsel must be based upon a ruling from the United States Internal Revenue Service or a change in law to that effect. (Sections 1401, 1402, 1403 and 1404)

*Notices.* Holders will receive notices by mail at their addresses as they appear in the security register. (Section 106)

*Title.* We may treat the person in whose name a debt security is registered on the applicable record date as the owner of the debt security for all purposes, whether or not it is overdue. (Section 309)

*Governing Law.* New York law will govern both indentures and the debt securities. (Section 112)

*Regarding the Trustee.* As of June 30, 2010, the trustee served as trustee for \$1.8 billion aggregate principal amount of our debt securities and \$1.2 billion aggregate principal amount of pollution control bonds issued on our behalf. In addition, the trustee serves as trustee for debt securities of some of our subsidiaries. We maintain brokerage relationships with the trustee and its affiliates.

If an event of default occurs under either indenture and is continuing, the trustee will be required to use the degree of care and skill of a prudent person in the conduct of that person's own affairs. The trustee will become obligated to exercise any of its powers under the applicable indenture at the request of any of the holders of any debt securities issued under such indenture only after those holders have offered the trustee indemnity satisfactory to it.

If the trustee becomes one of our creditors, its rights to obtain payment of claims in specified circumstances, or to realize for its own account on certain property received in respect of any such claim as security or otherwise will be limited under the terms of the applicable indenture. (Section 613) The trustee may engage in certain other transactions; however, if the trustee acquires any conflicting interest (within the meaning specified under the Trust Indenture Act), it will be required to eliminate the conflict or resign. (Section 608)

**Provisions Applicable Solely to Senior Debt Securities**

*Ranking.* Our senior debt securities will rank equally in right of payment with all of our other existing and future unsecured and unsubordinated indebtedness.

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### **Provisions Applicable Solely to Junior Subordinated Debt Securities**

*Subordination.* The junior subordinated debt securities are subordinate and junior in right of payment, to the extent and in the manner stated in the junior subordinated indenture, to all of our senior indebtedness, as defined in the junior subordinated indenture.

Unless we inform you otherwise in a prospectus supplement, **senior indebtedness** means:

all indebtedness and obligations of, or guaranteed or assumed by, us for borrowed money or evidenced by bonds, debentures, notes or other similar instruments, whether existing on the date of the junior subordinated indenture or subsequently created, incurred or assumed, and

all amendments, renewals, extensions, modifications and refundings of any indebtedness or obligations of that kind.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, **senior indebtedness** excludes (i) our indebtedness to our subsidiaries, (ii) trade accounts payable and accrued liabilities arising in the ordinary course of business and (iii) the junior subordinated debt securities and any other indebtedness or obligations that would otherwise constitute indebtedness if it is specifically designated as being subordinate, or not superior, in right of payment to the junior subordinated debt securities. **Senior indebtedness** includes \$840 million of our 2.0% Zero-Premium Exchangeable Subordinated Notes due 2029.

We will describe additional provisions of our junior subordinated debt securities in a prospectus supplement applicable to the particular series of junior subordinated debt securities.

*Defeasance.* Upon the effectiveness of any defeasance or covenant defeasance permitted with respect to our junior subordinated securities, the junior subordinated debt securities then outstanding shall cease to be subordinated. See **Provisions Applicable to Both Indentures** **Defeasance** .

### **DESCRIPTION OF OUR CAPITAL STOCK**

The following descriptions are summaries of material terms of our common stock, preferred stock, articles of incorporation and bylaws. This summary is qualified by reference to our restated articles of incorporation and amended and restated bylaws, each as amended to date, copies of which we have filed or incorporated by reference as exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part, and by the provisions of applicable law. As of July 31, 2010, our authorized capital stock consisted of:

1,000,000,000 shares of common stock, par value \$0.01 per share, of which 421,744,607 shares were outstanding, excluding 166 shares held as treasury stock, and

20,000,000 shares of preferred stock, par value \$0.01 per share, of which no shares were outstanding.

A series of our preferred stock, designated Series A Preferred Stock, has been reserved for issuance upon exercise of the preferred stock purchase rights attached to each share of our common stock pursuant to the shareholder rights plan discussed below.

#### **Common Stock**

*Voting Rights.* Holders of our common stock are entitled to one vote for each share on all matters submitted to a vote of shareholders, including the election of directors. There are no cumulative voting rights. Subject to the voting rights

expressly conferred under prescribed conditions to the holders of our preferred stock, the holders of our common stock possess exclusive full voting power for the election of directors and for all other purposes. Our bylaws provide that director nominees are elected by the vote of a majority of the votes cast with respect to the director by shareholders entitled to vote at the meeting in an uncontested election. An election is contested if, at a specified time before we file our definitive proxy statement with the SEC, the number of nominees exceeds the number of directors to be elected, in which case directors will be elected by the vote of a plurality of the votes cast by shareholders entitled to vote at the meeting.

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*Dividends.* Subject to preferences that may be applicable to any of our outstanding preferred stock, the holders of our common stock are entitled to dividends when, as and if declared by the board of directors out of funds legally available for that purpose.

*Liquidation Rights.* If we are liquidated, terminated or wound up, the holders of our common stock will be entitled to a pro rata share in any distribution to shareholders, but only after satisfaction of all of our liabilities and of the prior rights of any outstanding class of our preferred stock, which may include the right to participate further with the holders of our common stock in the distribution of any of our remaining assets.

*Preemptive Rights.* Holders of our common stock are not entitled to any preemptive or conversion rights or other subscription rights.

*Transfer Agent and Registrar.* Our shareholder services division serves as transfer agent and registrar for our common stock.

*Other Provisions.* There are no redemption or sinking fund provisions applicable to our common stock. No personal liability will attach to holders of such shares under the laws of the State of Texas. Subject to the provisions of our articles of incorporation and bylaws imposing certain supermajority voting provisions, the rights of the holders of shares of our common stock may not be modified except by a vote of at least a majority of the shares outstanding, voting together as a single class.

## **Preferred Stock**

Our board of directors may cause us to issue preferred stock from time to time in one or more series and may fix the number of shares and the terms of each series without the approval of our shareholders. Our board of directors may determine the terms of each series, including:

- the designation of the series,
- dividend rates and payment dates,
- whether dividends will be cumulative, non-cumulative or partially cumulative, and related terms,
- redemption rights,
- liquidation rights,
- sinking fund provisions,
- conversion rights,
- voting rights, and
- any other terms.

The prospectus supplement relating to any series of preferred stock will include specific terms relating to the offering. We will file the form of the preferred stock with the SEC before we issue any of it. The prospectus supplement for any offering of preferred stock will include some or all of the following terms:

the title of the preferred stock,

the maximum number of shares of the series,

the dividend rate or the method of calculating the dividend, the date from which dividends will accrue and whether dividends will be cumulative,

any liquidation preference,

any optional redemption provisions,

any sinking fund or other provisions that would obligate us to redeem or purchase the preferred stock,

any terms for the conversion or exchange of the preferred stock for other securities of us or any other entity,

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any voting rights, and

any other preferences and relative, participating, optional or other special rights or any qualifications, limitations or restrictions on the rights of the shares.

The issuance of preferred stock, while providing desired flexibility in connection with possible acquisitions and other corporate purposes, could adversely affect the voting power of holders of our common stock. It could also affect the likelihood that holders of our common stock will receive dividend payments and payments upon liquidation. The issuance of shares of preferred stock, or the issuance of rights to purchase shares of preferred stock, could be used to discourage an attempt to obtain control of us. For example, if, in the exercise of its fiduciary obligations, our board were to determine that a takeover proposal was not in our best interest, the board could authorize the issuance of a series of preferred stock containing class voting rights that would enable the holder or holders of the series to prevent or make the change of control transaction more difficult. Alternatively, a change of control transaction deemed by the board to be in our best interest could be facilitated by issuing a series of preferred stock having sufficient voting rights to provide a required percentage vote of the shareholders.

For purposes of the rights plan described below, our board of directors has designated a series of preferred stock to constitute the Series A Preferred Stock. For a description of the rights plan, see [Shareholder Rights Plan](#).

### **Anti-Takeover Effects of Texas Laws and Our Charter and Bylaw Provisions**

Some provisions of Texas law and our articles of incorporation and bylaws could make the following actions more difficult:

acquisition of us by means of a tender offer,

acquisition of control of us by means of a proxy contest or otherwise, or

removal of our incumbent officers and directors.

These provisions, as well as our shareholder rights plan, are designed to discourage coercive takeover practices and inadequate takeover bids. These provisions are also designed to encourage persons seeking to acquire control of us to first negotiate with our board of directors. We believe that the benefits of this increased protection gives us the potential ability to negotiate with the proponent of an unfriendly or unsolicited proposal to acquire or restructure us, and that the benefits of this increased protection outweigh the disadvantages of discouraging those proposals, because negotiation of those proposals could result in an improvement of their terms.

### ***Charter and Bylaw Provisions***

*Election and Removal of Directors.* The exact number of members of our board of directors will be fixed from time to time by resolution of the board of directors. Members of our board of directors who were elected at or prior to the 2008 annual meeting of shareholders are assigned to one of three classes, with directors in each class serving for staggered three-year terms. However, this classified structure is being phased out. Beginning at our 2009 annual meeting of shareholders, all directors are elected to one-year terms. Any director elected for a longer term before the 2009 annual meeting of shareholders, including the directors elected at our 2008 annual meeting to serve for terms expiring at our 2011 annual meeting, will hold office for his or her entire term. Accordingly, all of our directors will be elected annually beginning at our 2011 annual meeting of shareholders.



No director may be removed except for cause, and, subject to the voting rights expressly conferred under prescribed conditions to the holders of our preferred stock, directors may be removed for cause only by the holders of a majority of the shares of capital stock entitled to vote at an election of directors. Subject to the voting rights expressly conferred under prescribed conditions to the holders of our preferred stock, any vacancy occurring on the board of directors and any newly created directorship may be filled by a majority of the remaining directors in office or by election by the shareholders.

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*Shareholder Meetings.* Our articles of incorporation and bylaws provide that special meetings of holders of common stock may be called only by the chairman of our board of directors, our chief executive officer, the president, the secretary, a majority of our board of directors or the holders of at least 50% of the shares outstanding and entitled to vote.

*Modification of Articles of Incorporation.* In general, amendments to our articles of incorporation that are recommended by the board of directors require the affirmative vote of holders of at least a majority of the voting power of all outstanding shares of capital stock entitled to vote in the election of directors. The provisions described above under *Election and Removal of Directors* and *Shareholder Meetings* may be amended only by the affirmative vote of holders of at least 66 $\frac{2}{3}$ % of the voting power of all outstanding shares of capital stock entitled to vote in the election of directors. The provisions described below under *Modification of Bylaws* may be amended only by the affirmative vote of holders of at least 80% of the voting power of all outstanding shares of capital stock entitled to vote in the election of directors.

*Modification of Bylaws.* Our board of directors has the power to alter, amend or repeal the bylaws or adopt new bylaws by the affirmative vote of at least 80% of all directors then in office at any regular or special meeting of the board of directors called for that purpose. The shareholders also have the power to alter, amend or repeal the bylaws or adopt new bylaws by the affirmative vote of holders of at least 80% of the voting power of all outstanding shares of capital stock entitled to vote in the election of directors, voting together as a single class.

*Other Limitations on Shareholder Actions.* Our bylaws also impose some procedural requirements on shareholders who wish to:

- make nominations in the election of directors,
- propose that a director be removed,
- propose any repeal or change in the bylaws, or
- propose any other business to be brought before an annual or special meeting of shareholders.

Under these procedural requirements, a shareholder must deliver timely notice to our corporate secretary of the nomination or proposal along with evidence of:

- the shareholder's status as a shareholder,
- the number of shares beneficially owned by the shareholder,
- a list of the persons with whom the shareholder is acting in concert, and
- the number of shares such persons beneficially own.

To be timely, a shareholder must deliver the notice:

- in connection with an annual meeting of shareholders, not less than 90 nor more than 180 days prior to the first anniversary of the date on which the immediately preceding year's annual meeting of shareholders was held; provided that if the date of the annual meeting is advanced by more than 30 days prior to or delayed by more than 60 days after the first anniversary of the preceding year's annual meeting of shareholders, not earlier than 180 days prior to the annual meeting and not later than the last to occur of (i) the 90th day prior to the annual

meeting or (ii) the 10th day following the day on which we first make public announcement of the date of the annual meeting, or

in connection with the nomination of director candidates at a special meeting of shareholders, generally not less than 40 nor more than 60 days prior to the date of the special meeting.

In order to submit a nomination for the board of directors, a shareholder must also submit information with respect to the nominee that we would be required to include in a proxy statement, as well as some other information. If a shareholder fails to follow the required procedures, the shareholder's nominee or proposal will be ineligible and will not be voted on by our shareholders.

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In connection with a special meeting of shareholders, the only business that will be conducted is that stated in the notice of special meeting, or otherwise properly brought before the meeting by or at the direction of the Chairman of the Meeting or the board of directors. Shareholders requesting a special meeting are permitted to make proposals for matters to be brought before the meeting in their request.

*Limitation on Liability of Directors.* Our articles of incorporation provide that no director will be personally liable to us or our shareholders for monetary damages for breach of fiduciary duty as a director, except as required by law as in effect from time to time. Currently, Texas law requires that liability be imposed for the following actions:

any breach of the director's duty of loyalty to us or our shareholders,

any act or omission not in good faith that constitutes a breach of duty of the director to the corporation or that involves intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of law,

a transaction from which the director received an improper benefit, regardless of whether or not the benefit resulted from an action taken within the scope of a director's duties, and

an act or omission for which the liability of a director is expressly provided for by statute.

Our bylaws provide that we will indemnify our officers and directors and advance expenses to them in connection with proceedings and claims, to the fullest extent permitted by the Texas Business Organizations Code ( TBOC ). The bylaws authorize our board of directors to indemnify and advance expenses to people other than our officers and directors in certain circumstances.

### ***Texas Anti-Takeover Law***

We are subject to Section 21.606 of the TBOC. That section prohibits Texas corporations from engaging in a wide range of specified transactions with any affiliated shareholder during the three-year period immediately following the affiliated shareholder's acquisition of shares in the absence of certain board of director or shareholder approvals. An affiliated shareholder of a corporation is any person, other than the corporation and any of its wholly owned subsidiaries, that is or was within the preceding three-year period the beneficial owner of 20% or more of the outstanding shares of stock entitled to vote generally in the election of directors. Section 21.606 may deter any potential unfriendly offers or other efforts to obtain control of us that are not approved by our board. This may deprive our shareholders of opportunities to sell shares of our common stock at a premium to the prevailing market price.

### **Shareholder Rights Plan**

Each share of our common stock includes one right to purchase from us a unit consisting of one one-thousandth of a share of our Series A Preferred Stock at a purchase price of \$42.50 per unit, subject to adjustment. The rights are issued pursuant to the Rights Agreement dated as of January 1, 2002 between us and JPMorgan Chase Bank (the Rights Agreement ). We have summarized selected portions of the Rights Agreement and the rights below. This summary is qualified by reference to the Rights Agreement, a copy of which we have incorporated by reference as an exhibit to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part.

*Detachment of Rights; Exercisability.* The rights will attach to all shares of our common stock issued prior to the release date, and no separate certificates for the rights will be distributed until the release date. The release date will occur, except in some cases, on the earlier of:

ten days following a public announcement that a person or group of affiliated or associated persons, whom we refer to collectively as an acquiring person, has acquired, or obtained the right to acquire, beneficial ownership of 20% or more of the outstanding shares of our common stock, or

ten business days following the start of a tender offer or exchange offer that would result in a person s becoming an acquiring person.

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Our board of directors may defer the release date in some circumstances. Also, some inadvertent acquisitions of our common stock will not result in a person's becoming an acquiring person if the person promptly divests itself of sufficient common stock.

The rights are not exercisable until the release date and will expire at the close of business on December 31, 2011, unless we redeem or exchange them at an earlier date as described below.

As soon as practicable after the release date, the rights agent will mail certificates representing the rights to holders of record of common stock as of the close of business on the release date. From that date on, the separate rights certificates alone will represent the rights. We will also issue rights with all shares of common stock issued prior to the release date. We will also issue rights with shares of common stock issued after the release date in connection with some employee benefit plans or upon conversion of some securities. Except as otherwise determined by our board of directors, we will not issue rights with any other shares of common stock issued after the release date. If we elect to distribute any rights by crediting book-entry accounts, such rights will be credits to the book-entry accounts and separate rights certificates will not be issued with respect to such rights.

*Flip-in Event.* A flip-in event will occur under the Rights Agreement when a person becomes an acquiring person other than pursuant to a permitted offer or a flip-over event (as defined below). The Rights Agreement defines permitted offer as a tender or exchange offer for all outstanding shares of our common stock at a price and on terms that a majority of the independent directors of our board of directors determines to be fair to and otherwise in the best interests of us and the best interests of our shareholders.

If a flip-in event occurs, each right, other than any right that has become null and void as described below, will become exercisable to receive (in lieu of the shares of Series A Preferred Stock otherwise purchasable) the number of shares of common stock, or in certain circumstances, cash, property or other securities, which has a current market price equal to two times the exercise price of the right. Please refer to the Rights Agreement for the definition of current market price.

*Exchange of Rights.* At any time after the occurrence of a flip-in event, and prior to a person's becoming the beneficial owner of 50% or more of our outstanding common stock or the occurrence of a flip-over event, we may exchange the rights (other than rights owned by an acquiring person or an affiliate or an associate of an acquiring person, which will have become void, in whole or in part), at an exchange ratio of one share of common stock, and/or other equity securities deemed to have the same value as one share of common stock, per right, subject to adjustment.

*Flip-Over Event.* A flip-over event will occur under the Rights Agreement when, at any time from and after the time a person becomes an acquiring person:

we are acquired by any person in a merger or other business combination transaction, other than specified mergers that follow a permitted offer, or

50% or more of our assets, cash flow or earning power is sold or transferred.

If a flip-over event occurs, each holder of a right, except rights that are voided as described below, will thereafter have the right to receive, on exercise of the right, a number of shares of common stock of the acquiring company that has a current market price equal to two times the exercise price of the right.

When a flip-in event or a flip-over event occurs, all rights that then are, or under the circumstances the Rights Agreement specifies previously were, beneficially owned by an acquiring person or specified related parties will

become null and void in the circumstances the Rights Agreement specifies.

*Series A Preferred Stock.* After the release date, each right will entitle the holder to purchase a one one-thousandth share of our Series A Preferred Stock, which fraction will be essentially the economic equivalent of one share of common stock.

*Anti-Dilution.* The number of outstanding rights associated with a share of common stock, the number of fractional shares of Series A Preferred Stock issuable upon exercise of a right and the exercise price of the right are subject to adjustment in the event of certain stock dividends on, or a subdivision, combination or

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reclassification of, our common stock occurring prior to the release date. The exercise price of the rights and the number of fractional shares of Series A Preferred Stock or other securities or property issuable on exercise of the rights are subject to adjustment from time to time to prevent dilution in the event of certain transactions affecting the Series A Preferred Stock.

With some exceptions, we will not be required to adjust the exercise price of the rights until cumulative adjustments amount to at least 1% of the exercise price. The Rights Agreement also will not require us to issue fractional shares of Series A Preferred Stock that are not integral multiples of the specified fractional share and, in lieu thereof, we will make a cash adjustment based on the market price of the Series A Preferred Stock on the last trading date prior to the date of exercise. Pursuant to the Rights Agreement, we reserve the right to require prior to the occurrence of any flip-in event or flip-over event that, on any exercise of rights, a number of rights must be exercised so that it will issue only whole shares of Series A Preferred Stock.

*Redemption of Rights.* At any time until the time a person becomes an acquiring person, we may redeem the rights in whole, but not in part, at a price of \$0.005 per right, subject to adjustment, payable, at our option, in cash, shares of common stock or such other consideration as our board of directors may determine. Upon such redemption, the rights will terminate and the only right of the holders of rights will be to receive the \$0.005 redemption price.

*Substitution.* If we have an insufficient number of authorized but unissued shares of common stock available to permit an exercise or exchange of rights upon the occurrence of a flip-in event, we may substitute certain other types of property for common stock so long as the total value received by the holder of the rights is equivalent to the value of the common stock that the shareholder would otherwise have received. We may substitute cash, property, equity securities or debt, reduce the exercise price of the rights or use any combination of the foregoing.

*No Rights as a Shareholder.* Until a right is exercised, a holder of rights will have no rights to vote or receive dividends or any other rights as a holder of our preferred or common stock.

*Amendment of Terms of Rights.* Our board of directors may amend any of the provisions of the Rights Agreement, other than the redemption price, at any time prior to the time a person becomes an acquiring person. Thereafter, the board of directors may only amend the Rights Agreement in order to cure any ambiguity, defect or inconsistency or to make changes that do not materially and adversely affect the interests of holders of the rights, excluding the interests of any acquiring person.

*Rights Agent.* JPMorgan Chase Bank will serve as rights agent with regard to the rights.

*Anti-Takeover Effects.* The rights will have anti-takeover effects. They will cause substantial dilution to any person or group that attempts to acquire us without the approval of our board of directors. As a result, the overall effect of the rights may be to make more difficult or discourage any attempt to acquire us even if such acquisition may be favorable to the interests of our shareholders. Because our board of directors can redeem the rights or approve a permitted offer, the rights should not interfere with a merger or other business combination approved by the board of directors.

## **DESCRIPTION OF STOCK PURCHASE CONTRACTS AND EQUITY UNITS**

We may issue stock purchase contracts, including contracts obligating holders to purchase from us, and obligating us to sell to the holders, a specified number of shares of common stock, preferred stock or other securities at a future date or dates. We may fix the price and number of securities subject to the stock purchase contracts at the time we issue the stock purchase contracts, or we may provide that the price and number of securities will be determined pursuant to a formula set forth in the stock purchase contracts. The stock purchase contracts may be issued separately or as part of



units consisting of a stock purchase contract and our debt securities or debt obligations of third parties, including U.S. treasury securities, securing the obligations of the holders of the units to purchase the securities under the stock purchase contracts. We refer to these units as equity units. The stock purchase contracts may require holders to secure their obligations under the stock purchase contracts in a specified manner. The stock purchase contracts also may require us to make periodic

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payments to the holders of the equity units or vice versa, and those payments may be unsecured on some basis.

The applicable prospectus supplement will describe the terms of the stock purchase contracts or equity units offered by such prospectus supplement. The description in the prospectus supplement will not necessarily be complete, and reference will be made to the stock purchase contracts or equity units, and, if applicable, collateral or depositary arrangements, relating to the stock purchase contracts or equity units, which will be filed with the SEC or otherwise incorporated by reference in our previous filings each time we issue stock purchase contracts or equity units. Certain material United States federal income tax considerations applicable to the equity units and the stock purchase contracts will also be discussed in the prospectus supplement.

**HOLDING COMPANY STRUCTURE**

We are a holding company that conducts substantially all of our operations through our subsidiaries. Our only significant assets are the capital stock of our subsidiaries, and our subsidiaries generate substantially all of our operating income and cash flow. As a result, dividends or advances from our subsidiaries are the principal source of funds necessary to meet our debt service obligations. Contractual provisions or laws, as well as our subsidiaries financial condition and operating requirements, may limit our ability to obtain cash from our subsidiaries that we may require to pay our debt service obligations, including payments on the debt securities. In addition, the debt securities will be effectively subordinated to all of the liabilities of our subsidiaries with regard to the assets and earnings of our subsidiaries.

**PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION**

We may sell the offered securities in and outside the United States:

- through underwriters or dealers,
- directly to purchasers, including our affiliates,
- through agents, or
- through a combination of any of these methods.

The prospectus supplement will include the following information:

- the terms of the offering,
- the names of any underwriters or agents,
- the name or names of any managing underwriter or underwriters,
- the purchase price of the securities,
- the net proceeds to us from the sale of the securities,
- any delayed delivery arrangements,
- any underwriting discounts, commissions and other items constituting underwriters' compensation,

any initial public offering price,

any discounts or concessions allowed or reallocated or paid to dealers, and

any commissions paid to agents.

**Sale Through Underwriters or Dealers**

If we use underwriters in the sale, the underwriters will acquire the securities for their own account. The underwriters may resell the securities from time to time in one or more transactions, including negotiated transactions, at a fixed public offering price or at varying prices determined at the time of sale. Underwriters

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may offer securities to the public either through underwriting syndicates represented by one or more managing underwriters or directly by one or more firms acting as underwriters. Unless we inform you otherwise in the prospectus supplement, the obligations of the underwriters to purchase the securities will be subject to certain conditions, and the underwriters will be obligated to purchase all the offered securities if they purchase any of them. The underwriters may change from time to time any initial public offering price and any discounts or concessions allowed or reallocated or paid to dealers.

During and after an offering through underwriters, the underwriters may purchase and sell the securities in the open market. These transactions may include overallotment and stabilizing transactions and purchases to cover syndicate short positions created in connection with the offering. The underwriters also may impose a penalty bid, which means that selling concessions allowed to syndicate members or other broker-dealers for the offered securities sold for their account may be reclaimed by the syndicate if the offered securities are repurchased by the syndicate in stabilizing or covering transactions. These activities may stabilize, maintain or otherwise affect the market price of the offered securities, which may be higher than the price that might otherwise prevail in the open market. If commenced, the underwriters may discontinue these activities at any time.

If we use dealers in the sale of securities, we may sell the securities to them as principals. They may then resell those securities to the public at varying prices determined by the dealers at the time of resale. The dealers participating in any sale of the securities may be deemed to be underwriters within the meaning of the Securities Act of 1933 with respect to any sale of these securities. We will include in the prospectus supplement the names of the dealers and the terms of the transaction.

## **Direct Sales and Sales Through Agents**

We may sell the securities directly. In that event, no underwriters or agents would be involved. We may also sell the securities through agents we designate from time to time. In the prospectus supplement, we will name any agent involved in the offer or sale of the offered securities, and we will describe any commissions payable by us to the agent. Unless we inform you otherwise in the prospectus supplement, any agent will agree to use its reasonable best efforts to solicit purchases for the period of its appointment.

We may sell the securities directly to institutional investors or others who may be deemed to be underwriters within the meaning of the Securities Act of 1933 with respect to any sale of those securities. We will describe the terms of any such sales in the prospectus supplement.

## **Delayed Delivery Contracts**

If we so indicate in the prospectus supplement, we may authorize agents, underwriters or dealers to solicit offers from certain types of institutions to purchase securities from us at the public offering price under delayed delivery contracts. These contracts would provide for payment and delivery on a specified date in the future. The contracts would be subject only to those conditions described in the prospectus supplement. The prospectus supplement will describe the commission payable for solicitation of those contracts.

## **Remarketing**

We may offer and sell any of the offered securities in connection with a remarketing upon their purchase, in accordance with a redemption or repayment by their terms or otherwise by one or more remarketing firms acting as principals for their own accounts or as our agents. We will identify any remarketing firm, the terms of any remarketing agreement and the compensation to be paid to the remarketing firm in the prospectus supplement. Remarketing firms may be deemed underwriters under the Securities Act of 1933.

### **Derivative Transactions**

We may enter into derivative transactions with third parties, or sell securities not covered by this prospectus to third parties in privately negotiated transactions. If the applicable prospectus supplement indicates, in connection with those derivatives, the third parties may sell securities covered by this prospectus

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and the applicable prospectus supplement, including in short sale transactions. If so, the third parties may use securities pledged by us or borrowed from us or others to settle those sales or to close out any related open borrowings of securities, and may use securities received from us in settlement of those derivatives to close out any related open borrowings of securities. The third parties in these sale transactions will be underwriters and, if not identified in this prospectus, will be identified in the applicable prospectus supplement or in a post-effective amendment to the registration statement of which this prospectus forms a part.

## **General Information**

We may have agreements with the remarketing firms, agents, dealers and underwriters to indemnify them against certain civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act of 1933, or to contribute with respect to payments that the agents, dealers or underwriters may be required to make. Such firms, agents, dealers and underwriters may be customers of, engage in transactions with or perform services for us in the ordinary course of their businesses.

Each series of offered securities will be a new issue, and other than the common stock, which is listed on the New York Stock Exchange and the Chicago Stock Exchange, will have no established trading market. We may elect to list any series of offered securities on an exchange, but we are not obligated to do so. It is possible that one or more underwriters may make a market in a series of offered securities. However, they will not be obligated to do so and may discontinue market making at any time without notice. We cannot assure you that a liquid trading market for any of our offered securities will develop.

## **LEGAL MATTERS**

The validity of the securities described in this prospectus will be passed upon for us by Baker Botts L.L.P., Houston, Texas. Scott E. Rozzell, Esq., our Executive Vice President, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary, or Rufus S. Scott, our Senior Vice President, Deputy General Counsel and Assistant Corporate Secretary, may pass upon other legal matters for us. Each of Messrs. Rozzell and Scott is the beneficial owner of less than 1% of our common stock. Any underwriters will be advised regarding issues relating to any offering by Dewey & LeBoeuf LLP.

## **EXPERTS**

The consolidated financial statements and the related consolidated financial statement schedules, incorporated in this document by reference from our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2009, and the effectiveness of our internal control over financial reporting, have been audited by Deloitte & Touche LLP, an independent registered public accounting firm, as stated in their reports, which are incorporated herein by reference. Such consolidated financial statements and consolidated financial statement schedules have been so incorporated in reliance upon the reports of such firm given upon their authority as experts in accounting and auditing.

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**PROSPECTUS**

**CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric, LLC**  
**1111 Louisiana**  
**Houston, Texas 77002**  
**(713) 207-1111**

**CENTERPOINT ENERGY HOUSTON ELECTRIC, LLC**

**GENERAL MORTGAGE BONDS**

This prospectus relates to general mortgage bonds that we may offer from time to time. We will provide additional terms of the general mortgage bonds in one or more supplements to this prospectus. You should read this prospectus and the related prospectus supplement carefully before you invest in the general mortgage bonds. No person may use this prospectus to offer and sell the mortgage bonds unless a prospectus supplement accompanies this prospectus.

**Investing in the general mortgage bonds involves risks. See **Risk Factors** on page 2 of this prospectus.**

**Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or determined if this prospectus is truthful or complete. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.**

The date of this prospectus is September 30, 2010.

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**ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS**

This prospectus is part of a registration statement we have filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) using a shelf registration process. Using this process, we may offer the general mortgage bonds (mortgage bonds) described in this prospectus in one or more offerings. Each time we use this prospectus to offer mortgage bonds, we will file a supplement to this prospectus with the SEC that will describe the specific terms of the offering and the mortgage bonds. The prospectus supplement may also add to, update or change the information contained in this prospectus. Before you invest, you should carefully read this prospectus, the applicable prospectus supplement and the information contained in the documents we refer to under the heading **Where You Can Find More Information**.

**You should rely only on the information contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus, any prospectus supplement and any written communication from us or any underwriter specifying the final terms of a particular offering. We have not authorized anyone to provide you with different information. We are not making an offer of these mortgage bonds in any jurisdiction where the offer is not permitted. You should not assume that the information contained in this prospectus, any prospectus supplement or any written communication from us or any underwriter specifying the final terms of a particular offering is accurate as of any date other than the date on the front of that document. Any information we have incorporated by reference is accurate only as of the date of the document incorporated by reference.**

The Bank of New York Mellon Trust Company, National Association, in its capacity as trustee for the mortgage bonds, has not participated in the preparation of this prospectus and assumes no responsibility for its content.

**WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION**

We file annual, quarterly and current reports and other information with the SEC. You may read and copy any document we file with the SEC at the SEC's public reference room located at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549. You may obtain further information regarding the operation of the SEC's public reference room by calling the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330. Our filings are also available to the public on the SEC's Internet site located at <http://www.sec.gov>. You can obtain information about us at the offices of the New York Stock Exchange, 20 Broad Street, New York, New York 10005.

This prospectus, which includes information incorporated by reference (see **Incorporation by Reference** below), is part of a registration statement we have filed with the SEC relating to the mortgage bonds we may offer. As permitted by SEC rules, this prospectus does not contain all of the information we have included in the registration statement and the accompanying exhibits and schedules we file with the SEC. You may refer to the registration statement, the exhibits and the schedules for more information about us and our securities. The registration statement, exhibits and schedules are available at the SEC's public reference room or through its Internet site.

**INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE**

We are incorporating by reference into this prospectus certain information we file with the SEC. This means we are disclosing important information to you by referring you to the documents containing the information. The information we incorporate by reference is considered to be part of this prospectus. Information that we file later with the SEC that is deemed incorporated by reference into this prospectus (but not information deemed pursuant to the SEC's rules to be furnished to and not filed with the SEC) will automatically update and supersede information previously included.

We are incorporating by reference into this prospectus the documents listed below and any subsequent filings we make with the SEC under Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934

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(excluding information deemed pursuant to the SEC's rules to be furnished and not filed with the SEC) until all the mortgage bonds are sold:

our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2009, and

our Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q for the periods ended March 31, 2010 and June 30, 2010.

You may also obtain a copy of our filings with the SEC at no cost by writing to or telephoning us at the following address:

CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric, LLC  
c/o CenterPoint Energy, Inc.  
Attn: Investor Relations  
P.O. Box 4567  
Houston, Texas 77210-4567  
(713) 207-6500

**ABOUT CENTERPOINT ENERGY HOUSTON ELECTRIC, LLC**

We provide electric transmission and distribution services to retail electric providers (REPs) serving over 2 million metered customers in a 5,000-square mile area of the Texas Gulf Coast that has a population of approximately 5.7 million people and includes the city of Houston. We are an indirect wholly owned subsidiary of CenterPoint Energy, Inc. (CenterPoint Energy), a public utility holding company.

Our principal executive offices are located at 1111 Louisiana, Houston, Texas 77002 (telephone number: (713) 207-1111).

**RISK FACTORS**

Our business is influenced by many factors that are difficult to predict and that involve uncertainties that may materially affect actual operating results, cash flows and financial condition. These risk factors include those described as such in the documents that are incorporated by reference in this prospectus (which risk factors are incorporated herein by reference), and could include additional uncertainties not presently known to us or that we currently do not consider material. Before making an investment decision, you should carefully consider these risks as well as any other information we include or incorporate by reference in this prospectus or include in any applicable prospectus supplement.

**CAUTIONARY STATEMENT REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING INFORMATION**

In this prospectus, including the information we incorporate by reference, we make statements concerning our expectations, beliefs, plans, objectives, goals, strategies, future events or performance and underlying assumptions and other statements that are not historical facts. These statements are forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Actual results may differ materially from those expressed or implied by these statements. You can generally identify our forward-looking statements by the words anticipate, believe, continue, could, estimate, expect, forecast, goal, intend, may, objective, plan, potential, should, will, or other similar words.

We have based our forward-looking statements on our management's beliefs and assumptions based on information available to our management at the time the statements are made. We caution you that assumptions, beliefs,

expectations, intentions and projections about future events may and often do vary materially from actual results. Therefore, we cannot assure you that actual results will not differ materially from those expressed or implied by our forward-looking statements.

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The following are some of the factors that could cause actual results to differ materially from those expressed or implied in forward-looking statements:

the resolution of the true-up proceedings, including, in particular, the results of appeals to the Texas Supreme Court regarding rulings obtained to date,

state and federal legislative and regulatory actions or developments relating to the environment, including those related to global climate change,

other state and federal legislative and regulatory actions or developments affecting various aspects of our business, including, among others, energy deregulation or re-regulation, health care reform and financial reform,

timely and appropriate rate actions and increases, allowing recovery of costs and a reasonable return on investment, including, without limitation, the outcome of the application to change rates we submitted to the Public Utility Commission of Texas in June 2010,

the timing and outcome of any audits, disputes or other proceedings relating to taxes,

problems with construction, implementation of necessary technology or other issues with respect to major capital projects that result in delays or in cost overruns that cannot be recouped in rates,

industrial, commercial and residential growth in our service territory and changes in market demand, including the effects of energy efficiency measures, and demographic patterns,

weather variations and other natural phenomena,

the impact of unplanned facility outages,

timely and appropriate regulatory actions allowing securitization or other recovery of costs associated with any future hurricanes or natural disasters,

changes in interest rates or rates of inflation,

commercial bank and financial market conditions, our access to capital, the cost of such capital, and the results of our financing and refinancing efforts, including availability of funds in the debt capital markets,

actions by rating agencies,

non-payment for our services due to financial distress of our customers,

the ability of RRI Energy, Inc. (formerly known as Reliant Energy, Inc. and Reliant Resources, Inc.) and its subsidiaries to satisfy their obligations to us, including indemnity obligations,

the ability of retail electric providers, and particularly our two largest customers, which are subsidiaries of NRG Retail LLC and TXU Energy Retail Company LLC, to satisfy their obligations to us and our subsidiaries,

the outcome of litigation brought by or against us,

our ability to control costs,

the investment performance of CenterPoint Energy's pension and postretirement benefit plans,

our potential business strategies, including restructurings, acquisitions or dispositions of assets or businesses, which we cannot assure will be completed or will have the anticipated benefits to us,

acquisition and merger activities involving our parent or our competitors, and

other factors we discuss in "Risk Factors" in Item 1A of Part II of our Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2010 and other reports we file from time to time with the SEC that are incorporated herein by reference.

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You should not place undue reliance on forward-looking statements. Each forward-looking statement speaks only as of the date of the particular statement.

**RATIO OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES**

The following table sets forth our ratios of earnings to fixed charges for each of the periods indicated. The ratios were calculated pursuant to applicable rules of the SEC.

|                                    | <b>Year Ended December 31,</b> |             |             |             |             | <b>Six Months</b> |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|
|                                    | <b>2005</b>                    | <b>2006</b> | <b>2007</b> | <b>2008</b> | <b>2009</b> | <b>Ended</b>      |
|                                    |                                |             |             |             |             | <b>June 30,</b>   |
|                                    |                                |             |             |             |             | <b>2010</b>       |
| Ratio of earnings to fixed charges | 1.99                           | 2.62        | 2.61        | 2.32        | 2.05        | 1.95(1)           |

- (1) We do not believe that the ratio for the six-month period is necessarily indicative of the ratios for the twelve-month periods due to the seasonal nature of our business.

**USE OF PROCEEDS**

Unless we inform you otherwise in the prospectus supplement, we anticipate using any net proceeds from the sale of the mortgage bonds offered by this prospectus for general corporate purposes. These purposes may include, but are not limited to:

- working capital,
- capital expenditures,
- acquisitions, and
- the repayment or refinancing of debt.

Pending any specific application, we may initially invest funds in short-term marketable securities, loan funds to affiliates or apply them to the reduction of short-term indebtedness or debt under our revolving credit facility.

**DESCRIPTION OF OUR GENERAL MORTGAGE BONDS**

The mortgage bonds that we may offer from time to time by this prospectus will be issued under our General Mortgage Indenture dated as of October 10, 2002, as amended and supplemented (the mortgage indenture), with The Bank of New York Mellon Trust Company, National Association (successor in trust to JPMorgan Chase Bank), as trustee. We have incorporated by reference the mortgage indenture as an exhibit to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part. The particular terms of any series of our mortgage bonds and the material provisions of the mortgage indenture will be described in the applicable prospectus supplement.

**PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION**

We may sell the offered mortgage bonds in and outside the United States:

through underwriters or dealers,

directly to purchasers, including our affiliates,

through agents, or

through a combination of any of these methods.

The prospectus supplement will include the following information:

the terms of the offering,

the names of any underwriters or agents,



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the name or names of any managing underwriter or underwriters,  
the purchase price of the mortgage bonds,  
the net proceeds to us from the sale of the mortgage bonds,  
any delayed delivery arrangements,  
any underwriting discounts, commissions and other items constituting underwriters' compensation,  
any initial public offering price,  
any discounts or concessions allowed or reallocated or paid to dealers, and  
any commissions paid to agents.

## **Sale Through Underwriters or Dealers**

If we use underwriters in the sale, the underwriters will acquire the mortgage bonds for their own account. The underwriters may resell the mortgage bonds from time to time in one or more transactions, including negotiated transactions, at a fixed public offering price or at varying prices determined at the time of sale. Underwriters may offer mortgage bonds to the public either through underwriting syndicates represented by one or more managing underwriters or directly by one or more firms acting as underwriters. Unless we inform you otherwise in the prospectus supplement, the obligations of the underwriters to purchase the mortgage bonds will be subject to certain conditions, and the underwriters will be obligated to purchase all the offered mortgage bonds if they purchase any of them. The underwriters may change from time to time any initial public offering price and any discounts or concessions allowed or reallocated or paid to dealers.

During and after an offering through underwriters, the underwriters may purchase and sell the mortgage bonds in the open market. These transactions may include overallotment and stabilizing transactions and purchases to cover syndicate short positions created in connection with the offering. The underwriters also may impose a penalty bid, which means that selling concessions allowed to syndicate members or other broker-dealers for the offered mortgage bonds sold for their account may be reclaimed by the syndicate if the offered mortgage bonds are repurchased by the syndicate in stabilizing or covering transactions. These activities may stabilize, maintain or otherwise affect the market price of the offered mortgage bonds, which may be higher than the price that might otherwise prevail in the open market. If commenced, the underwriters may discontinue these activities at any time.

If we use dealers in the sale of mortgage bonds, we may sell the mortgage bonds to them as principals. They may then resell those mortgage bonds to the public at varying prices determined by the dealers at the time of resale. The dealers participating in any sale of the mortgage bonds may be deemed to be underwriters within the meaning of the Securities Act of 1933 with respect to any sale of these mortgage bonds. We will include in the prospectus supplement the names of the dealers and the terms of the transaction.

## **Direct Sales and Sales Through Agents**

We may sell the mortgage bonds directly. In that event, no underwriters or agents would be involved. We may also sell the mortgage bonds through agents we designate from time to time. In the prospectus supplement, we will name any agent involved in the offer or sale of the offered mortgage bonds, and we will describe any commissions payable

by us to the agent. Unless we inform you otherwise in the prospectus supplement, any agent will agree to use its reasonable best efforts to solicit purchases for the period of its appointment.

We may sell the mortgage bonds directly to institutional investors or others who may be deemed to be underwriters within the meaning of the Securities Act of 1933 with respect to any sale of those mortgage bonds. We will describe the terms of any such sales in the prospectus supplement.

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### **Delayed Delivery Contracts**

If we so indicate in the prospectus supplement, we may authorize agents, underwriters or dealers to solicit offers from certain types of institutions to purchase mortgage bonds from us at the public offering price under delayed delivery contracts. These contracts would provide for payment and delivery on a specified date in the future. The contracts would be subject only to those conditions described in the prospectus supplement. The prospectus supplement will describe the commission payable for solicitation of those contracts.

### **Remarketing**

We may offer and sell any of the offered mortgage bonds in connection with a remarketing upon their purchase, in accordance with a redemption or repayment by their terms or otherwise by one or more remarketing firms acting as principals for their own accounts or as our agents. We will identify any remarketing firm, the terms of any remarketing agreement and the compensation to be paid to the remarketing firm in the prospectus supplement. Remarketing firms may be deemed underwriters under the Securities Act of 1933.

### **Derivative Transactions**

We may enter into derivative transactions with third parties, or sell securities not covered by this prospectus to third parties in privately negotiated transactions. If the applicable prospectus supplement indicates, in connection with those derivatives, the third parties may sell mortgage bonds covered by this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement, including in short sale transactions. If so, the third parties may use securities pledged by us or borrowed from us or others to settle those sales or to close out any related open borrowings of securities, and may use securities received from us in settlement of those derivatives to close out any related open borrowings of securities. The third parties in these sale transactions will be underwriters and, if not identified in this prospectus, will be identified in the applicable prospectus supplement or in a post-effective amendment to the registration statement of which this prospectus forms a part.

### **General Information**

We may have agreements with the remarketing firms, agents, dealers and underwriters to indemnify them against certain civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act of 1933, or to contribute with respect to payments that the agents, dealers or underwriters may be required to make. Such firms, agents, dealers and underwriters may be customers of, engage in transactions with or perform services for us in the ordinary course of their businesses.

Each series of offered mortgage bonds will be a new issue and will have no established trading market. We may elect to list any series of offered mortgage bonds on an exchange, but we are not obligated to do so. It is possible that one or more underwriters may make a market in a series of offered mortgage bonds. However, they will not be obligated to do so and may discontinue market making at any time without notice. We cannot assure you that a liquid trading market for any of our offered mortgage bonds will develop.

## **LEGAL MATTERS**

The validity of the mortgage bonds described in this prospectus will be passed upon for us by Baker Botts L.L.P., Houston, Texas. Scott E. Rozzell, Esq., our Executive Vice President, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary, or Rufus S. Scott, our Senior Vice President, Deputy General Counsel and Assistant Corporate Secretary, may pass upon other legal matters for us. Each of Messrs. Rozzell and Scott is the beneficial owner of less than 1% of CenterPoint Energy's common stock. Any underwriters will be advised regarding issues relating to any offering by Dewey & LeBoeuf LLP.



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**EXPERTS**

The consolidated financial statements and the related consolidated financial statement schedules, incorporated in this document by reference from our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2009 have been audited by Deloitte & Touche LLP, an independent registered public accounting firm, as stated in their reports, which are incorporated herein by reference. Such consolidated financial statements and consolidated financial statement schedules have been so incorporated in reliance upon the reports of such firm given upon their authority as experts in accounting and auditing.

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**PROSPECTUS**

**CenterPoint Energy Resources Corp.  
1111 Louisiana  
Houston, Texas 77002  
(713) 207-1111**

**CENTERPOINT ENERGY RESOURCES CORP.**

**SENIOR DEBT SECURITIES**

This prospectus relates to senior debt securities that we may offer from time to time. We will provide additional terms of the senior debt securities in one or more supplements to this prospectus. You should read this prospectus and the related prospectus supplement carefully before you invest in the senior debt securities. No person may use this prospectus to offer and sell the senior debt securities unless a prospectus supplement accompanies this prospectus.

**Investing in the senior debt securities involves risks. See Risk Factors on page 2 of this prospectus.**

**Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or determined if this prospectus is truthful or complete. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.**

The date of this prospectus is September 30, 2010.

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**ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS**

This prospectus is part of a registration statement we have filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) using a shelf registration process. Using this process, we may offer the senior debt securities described in this prospectus (debt securities) in one or more offerings. Each time we use this prospectus to offer debt securities, we will file a supplement to this prospectus with the SEC that will describe the specific terms of the offering and the debt securities. The prospectus supplement may also add to, update or change the information contained in this prospectus. Before you invest, you should carefully read this prospectus, the applicable prospectus supplement and the information contained in the documents we refer to under the heading Where You Can Find More Information.

**You should rely only on the information contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus, any prospectus supplement and any written communication from us or any underwriter specifying the final terms of a particular offering. We have not authorized anyone to provide you with different information. We are not making an offer of these debt securities in any jurisdiction where the offer is not permitted. You should not assume that the information contained in this prospectus, any prospectus supplement or any written communication from us or any underwriter specifying the final terms of a particular offering is accurate as of any date other than the date on the front of that document. Any information we have incorporated by reference is accurate only as of the date of the document incorporated by reference.**

References in this prospectus to the terms we, us, our or other similar terms mean CenterPoint Energy Resources Corp. and its subsidiaries, and references to CenterPoint Energy mean our indirect parent, CenterPoint Energy, Inc., unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

The Bank of New York Mellon Trust Company, National Association, in its capacity as trustee for the debt securities, has not participated in the preparation of this prospectus and assumes no responsibility for its content.

**WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION**

We file annual, quarterly and current reports and other information with the SEC. You may read and copy any document we file with the SEC at the SEC's public reference room located at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549. You may obtain further information regarding the operation of the SEC's public reference room by calling the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330. Our filings are also available to the public on the SEC's Internet site located at <http://www.sec.gov>. You can obtain information about us at the offices of the New York Stock Exchange, 20 Broad Street, New York, New York 10005.

This prospectus, which includes information incorporated by reference (see Incorporation by Reference below), is part of a registration statement we have filed with the SEC relating to the debt securities we may offer. As permitted by SEC rules, this prospectus does not contain all of the information we have included in the registration statement and the accompanying exhibits and schedules we file with the SEC. You may refer to the registration statement, the exhibits and the schedules for more information about us and our securities. The registration statement, exhibits and schedules are available at the SEC's public reference room or through its Internet site.

**INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE**

We are incorporating by reference into this prospectus certain information we file with the SEC. This means we are disclosing important information to you by referring you to the documents containing the information. The information we incorporate by reference is considered to be part of this prospectus. Information that we file later with



the SEC that is deemed incorporated by reference into this prospectus (but not information deemed pursuant to the SEC's rules to be furnished to and not filed with the SEC) will automatically update and supersede information previously included.

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We are incorporating by reference into this prospectus the documents listed below and any subsequent filings we make with the SEC under Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (excluding information deemed pursuant to the SEC's rules to be furnished and not filed with the SEC) until all the debt securities are sold:

our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2009, and

our Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q for the periods ended March 31, 2010 and June 30, 2010.

You may also obtain a copy of our filings with the SEC at no cost by writing to or telephoning us at the following address:

CenterPoint Energy Resources Corp.  
c/o CenterPoint Energy, Inc.  
Attn: Investor Relations  
P.O. Box 4567  
Houston, Texas 77210-4567  
(713) 207-6500

**ABOUT CENTERPOINT ENERGY RESOURCES CORP.**

We own and operate natural gas distribution systems in six states. Subsidiaries of ours own interstate natural gas pipelines and gas gathering systems and provide various ancillary services. A wholly owned subsidiary of ours offers variable and fixed-price physical natural gas supplies primarily to commercial and industrial customers and electric and gas utilities. We are an indirect wholly owned subsidiary of CenterPoint Energy, a public utility holding company.

Our principal executive offices are located at 1111 Louisiana, Houston, Texas 77002 (telephone number: 713-207-1111).

**RISK FACTORS**

Our businesses are influenced by many factors that are difficult to predict and that involve uncertainties that may materially affect actual operating results, cash flows and financial condition. These risk factors include those described as such in the documents that are incorporated by reference in this prospectus (which risk factors are incorporated herein by reference), and could include additional uncertainties not presently known to us or that we currently do not consider material. Before making an investment decision, you should carefully consider these risks as well as any other information we include or incorporate by reference in this prospectus or include in any applicable prospectus supplement.

**CAUTIONARY STATEMENT REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING INFORMATION**

In this prospectus, including the information we incorporate by reference, we make statements concerning our expectations, beliefs, plans, objectives, goals, strategies, future events or performance and underlying assumptions and other statements that are not historical facts. These statements are forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Actual results may differ materially from those expressed or implied by these statements. You can generally identify our forward-looking statements by the words anticipate, believe, continue, could, estimate, expect, forecast, goal, intend, may, objective, plan, potent, should, will or other similar words.

We have based our forward-looking statements on our management's beliefs and assumptions based on information available to our management at the time the statements are made. We caution you that assumptions, beliefs, expectations, intentions and projections about future events may and often do vary materially from actual results. Therefore, we cannot assure you that actual results will not differ materially from those expressed or implied by our forward-looking statements.

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The following are some of the factors that could cause actual results to differ materially from those expressed or implied in forward-looking statements:

state and federal legislative and regulatory actions or developments relating to the environment, including those related to global climate change,

other state and federal legislative and regulatory actions or developments affecting various aspects of our business, including, among others, energy deregulation or re-regulation, health care reform and financial reform,

timely and appropriate rate actions and increases, allowing recovery of costs and a reasonable return on investment,

the timing and outcome of any audits, disputes or other proceedings relating to taxes,

problems with construction, implementation of necessary technology or other issues with respect to major capital projects that result in delays or in cost overruns that cannot be recouped in rates,

industrial, commercial and residential growth in our service territory and changes in market demand, including the effects of energy efficiency measures, and demographic patterns,

the timing and extent of changes in commodity prices, particularly natural gas and natural gas liquids,

the timing and extent of changes in the supply of natural gas, including supplies available for gathering by our field services business and transport by our interstate pipelines,

the timing and extent of changes in natural gas basis differentials,

weather variations and other natural phenomena,

the impact of unplanned facility outages,

changes in interest rates or rates of inflation,

commercial bank and financial market conditions, our access to capital, the cost of such capital, and the results of our financing and refinancing efforts, including availability of funds in the debt capital markets,

actions by rating agencies,

effectiveness of our risk management activities,

inability of various counterparties to meet their obligations to us,

non-payment for our services due to financial distress of our customers,

the ability of RRI Energy, Inc. (formerly known as Reliant Energy, Inc. and Reliant Resources, Inc.) and its subsidiaries to satisfy their obligations to us, including indemnity obligations, or in connection with the contractual arrangements pursuant to which we are their guarantor,

the outcome of litigation brought by or against us,

our ability to control costs,

the investment performance of CenterPoint Energy's pension and postretirement benefit plans,

our potential business strategies, including restructurings, acquisitions or dispositions of assets or businesses, which we cannot assure will be completed or will have the anticipated benefits to us,

acquisition and merger activities involving our parent or our competitors, and

other factors we discuss in "Risk Factors" in Item 1A of Part II of our Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2010 and other reports we file from time to time with the SEC that are incorporated herein by reference.

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You should not place undue reliance on forward-looking statements. Each forward-looking statement speaks only as of the date of the particular statement.

**RATIOS OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES**

The following table sets forth our ratios of earnings to fixed charges for each of the periods indicated. The ratios were calculated pursuant to applicable rules of the SEC.

|                                    | <b>Year Ended December 31,</b> |             |             |             |             | <b>Six Months</b>                  |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------------------|
|                                    | <b>2005</b>                    | <b>2006</b> | <b>2007</b> | <b>2008</b> | <b>2009</b> | <b>Ended<br/>June 30,<br/>2010</b> |
| Ratio of earnings to fixed charges | 2.61                           | 2.64        | 3.04        | 3.30        | 2.63        | 3.24(1)                            |

- (1) We do not believe that the ratio for the six-month period is necessarily indicative of the ratios for the twelve-month periods due to the seasonal nature of our business.

**USE OF PROCEEDS**

Unless we inform you otherwise in the prospectus supplement, we anticipate using any net proceeds from the sale of the debt securities offered by this prospectus for general corporate purposes. These purposes may include, but are not limited to:

- working capital,
- capital expenditures,
- acquisitions,
- the repayment or refinancing of debt, and
- loans or advances to subsidiaries.

Pending any specific application, we may initially invest funds in short-term marketable securities, loan funds to affiliates or apply them to the reduction of short-term indebtedness, commercial paper or debt under our revolving credit facility.

**DESCRIPTION OF OUR SENIOR DEBT SECURITIES**

The debt securities offered by this prospectus will be issued under an indenture, dated as of February 1, 1998, as supplemented, between us and The Bank of New York Mellon Trust Company, National Association (successor to JPMorgan Chase Bank, National Association), as trustee. We have incorporated by reference the indenture as an exhibit to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part. We have summarized selected provisions of the indenture and the debt securities below. This summary is not complete and is qualified in its entirety by reference to the indenture. References to section numbers in this prospectus, unless otherwise indicated, are references to section

numbers of the indenture. For purposes of this summary, the terms we, our, ours, and us refer only to CenterPoint Energy Resources Corp. and not to any of our subsidiaries.

We may issue debt securities from time to time in one or more series under the indenture. There is no limitation on the amount of debt securities we may issue under the indenture. We will describe the particular terms of each series of debt securities we offer in a supplement to this prospectus. The terms of our debt securities will include those set forth in the indenture and those made a part of the indenture by the Trust Indenture Act of 1939. You should carefully read the summary below, the applicable prospectus supplement and the provisions of the indenture that may be important to you before investing in our debt securities.

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### **Ranking**

The debt securities offered by this prospectus will:

be general unsecured obligations,

rank equally in right of payment with all of our other existing and future unsecured and unsubordinated indebtedness, and

with respect to the assets and earnings of our subsidiaries, structurally rank below all of the liabilities of our subsidiaries.

Subject to the exceptions, and subject to compliance with the applicable requirements, set forth in the indenture, we may discharge our obligations under the indenture with respect to our debt securities as described below under Defeasance.

### **Terms**

We may issue debt securities in separate series from time to time under the indenture. The total principal amount of debt securities that may be issued under the indenture is unlimited. We may limit the maximum total principal amount for the debt securities of any series. However, any limit may be increased by resolution of our board of directors. (Section 301) We will establish the terms of each series of debt securities, which may not be inconsistent with the indenture, in a supplemental indenture.

We will describe the specific terms of the series of debt securities being offered in a supplement to this prospectus. These terms will include some or all of the following:

the title of the debt securities,

any limit on the total principal amount of the debt securities of the series,

the date or dates on which the principal of the debt securities will be payable or the method used to determine or extend those dates,

any interest rate on the debt securities, any date from which interest will accrue, any interest payment dates and regular record dates for interest payments, or the method used to determine any of the foregoing, and the basis for calculating interest if other than a 360-day year of twelve 30-day months,

the place or places where payments on the debt securities will be payable, the debt securities may be presented for registration of transfer or exchange, and notices and demands to or upon us relating to the debt securities may be made,

any provisions that would allow or obligate us to redeem or purchase the debt securities prior to their maturity,

the denominations in which we will issue the debt securities, if other than denominations of an integral multiple of \$1,000,

any provisions that would determine payments on the debt securities by reference to an index or a formula,



any foreign currency, currencies or currency units in which payments on the debt securities will be payable and the manner for determining the equivalent amount in \$U.S.,

any provisions for payments on the debt securities in one or more currencies or currency units other than those in which the debt securities are stated to be payable,

the percentage of the principal amount at which the debt securities will be issued and the portion of the principal amount of the debt securities that will be payable if the maturity of the debt securities is accelerated, if other than the entire principal amount,

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if the principal amount to be paid at the stated maturity of the debt securities is not determinable as of one or more dates prior to the stated maturity, the amount that will be deemed to be the principal amount as of any such date for any purpose,

any variation of the defeasance and covenant defeasance sections of the indenture and the manner in which our election to defease the debt securities will be evidenced, if other than by a board resolution,

whether we will issue the debt securities in the form of temporary or permanent global securities, the depositories for the global securities, and provisions for exchanging or transferring the global securities,

whether the interest rate of the debt securities may be reset,

whether the stated maturity of the debt securities may be extended,

any addition to or change in the events of default for the debt securities and any change in the right of the trustee or the holders of the debt securities to declare the principal amount of the debt securities due and payable,

any addition to or change in the covenants in the indenture,

any additions or changes to the indenture necessary to issue the debt securities in bearer form, registrable or not registrable as to principal, and with or without interest coupons,

the appointment of any paying agents for the debt securities, if other than the trustee,

the terms of any right to convert or exchange the debt securities into any other securities or property,

the terms and conditions, if any, pursuant to which the debt securities may be secured,

any restriction or condition on the transferability of the debt securities, and

any other terms of the debt securities consistent with the indenture. (Section 301)

We may sell the debt securities, including original issue discount securities, at a substantial discount below their stated principal amount. If there are any special United States federal income tax considerations applicable to debt securities we sell at an original issue discount, we will describe them in the prospectus supplement. In addition, we will describe in the prospectus supplement any special United States federal income tax considerations and any other special considerations for any debt securities we sell which are denominated in a currency or currency unit other than \$U.S.

**Form, Exchange and Transfer**

We will issue the debt securities in registered form, without coupons. Unless we inform you otherwise in the prospectus supplement, we will only issue debt securities in denominations of integral multiples of \$1,000. (Section 302)

Holders generally will be able to exchange debt securities for other debt securities of the same series with the same total principal amount and the same terms but in different authorized denominations. (Section 305)

Holders may present debt securities for exchange or for registration of transfer at the office of the security registrar or at the office of any transfer agent we designate for that purpose. The security registrar or designated transfer agent will exchange or transfer the debt securities if it is satisfied with the documents of title and identity of the person making the request. We will not charge a service charge for any exchange or registration of transfer of debt securities. However, we may require payment of a sum sufficient to cover any tax or other governmental charge payable for the registration of transfer or exchange. Unless we inform you otherwise in the prospectus

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supplement, we will appoint the trustee as security registrar. We will identify any transfer agent in addition to the security registrar in the prospectus supplement. (Section 305) At any time we may:

designate additional transfer agents,

rescind the designation of any transfer agent, or

approve a change in the office of any transfer agent.

However, we are required to maintain a transfer agent in each place of payment for the debt securities at all times. (Sections 305 and 1002)

If we elect to redeem a series of debt securities, neither we nor the trustee will be required:

to issue, register the transfer of or exchange any debt securities of that series during the period beginning at the opening of business 15 days before the day we mail the notice of redemption for the series and ending at the close of business on the day the notice is mailed, or

to register the transfer or exchange of any debt security of that series if we have so selected the series for redemption, in whole or in part, except for the unredeemed portion of the series. (Section 305)

## **Book-Entry**

We may issue the debt securities of a series in the form of one or more global debt securities that would be deposited with a depositary or its nominee identified in the prospectus supplement. We may issue global debt securities in either temporary or permanent form. We will describe in the prospectus supplement the terms of any depositary arrangement and the rights and limitations of owners of beneficial interests in any global debt security.

## **Payment and Paying Agents**

Under the indenture, we will pay interest on the debt securities to the persons in whose names the debt securities are registered at the close of business on the regular record date for each interest payment. However, unless we inform you otherwise in the prospectus supplement, we will pay the interest payable on the debt securities at their stated maturity to the persons to whom we pay the principal amount of the debt securities. The initial payment of interest on any series of debt securities issued between a regular record date and the related interest payment date will be payable in the manner provided by the terms of the series, which we will describe in the prospectus supplement. (Section 307)

Unless we inform you otherwise in the prospectus supplement, we will pay principal, premium, if any, and interest on the debt securities at the offices of the paying agents we designate. However, except in the case of a global security, we may pay interest by:

check mailed to the address of the person entitled to the payment as it appears in the security register, or

by wire transfer in immediately available funds to the place and account designated in writing by the person entitled to the payment as specified in the security register.

We will designate the trustee as the sole paying agent for the debt securities unless we inform you otherwise in the prospectus supplement. If we initially designate any other paying agents for a series of debt securities, we will identify them in the prospectus supplement. At any time, we may designate additional paying agents or rescind the designation

of any paying agents. However, we are required to maintain a paying agent in each place of payment for the debt securities at all times. (Sections 307 and 1002)

Any money deposited with the trustee or any paying agent for the payment of principal, premium, if any, and interest on the debt securities that remains unclaimed for two years after the date the payments became due, may be repaid to us upon our request. After we have been repaid, holders entitled to those payments may only look to us for payment as our unsecured general creditors. The trustee and any paying agents will not be liable for those payments after we have been repaid. (Section 1003)

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### **Restrictive Covenants**

We will describe any restrictive covenants for any series of debt securities in the prospectus supplement.

### **Consolidation, Merger and Sale of Assets**

Under the indenture, we may not consolidate with or merge into, or convey, transfer or lease our properties and assets substantially as an entirety, to any person, referred to as a successor person, and we may not permit any person to consolidate with or merge into, or convey, transfer or lease its properties and assets substantially as an entirety to us, unless:

the successor person is a corporation, partnership, trust or other entity organized and validly existing under the laws of the United States of America or any state thereof or the District of Columbia,

the successor person expressly assumes our obligations with respect to the debt securities and the indenture,

immediately after giving effect to the transaction, no event of default, and no event which, after notice or lapse of time or both, would become an event of default, would occur and be continuing, and

we have delivered to the trustee the certificates and opinions required under the indenture. (Section 801)

As used in the indenture, the term corporation means a corporation, association, company, joint-stock company or business trust.

### **Events of Default**

Unless we inform you otherwise in the prospectus supplement, each of the following will be an event of default under the indenture for a series of debt securities:

our failure to pay principal or premium, if any, on that series when due, including at maturity or upon redemption,

our failure to pay any interest on that series for 30 days after the interest becomes due,

our failure to deposit any sinking fund payment relating to that series when due,

our failure to perform, or our breach in any material respect of, any other covenant or warranty in the indenture, other than a covenant or warranty included in the indenture solely for the benefit of another series of debt securities issued under the indenture, for 90 days after either the trustee or holders of at least 25% in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series have given us written notice of the breach in the manner required by the indenture,

specified events involving our bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization, and

any other event of default we may provide for that series,

provided, however, that no event described in the fourth, fifth or sixth bullet points above will be an event of default until an officer of the trustee, assigned to and working in the trustee's corporate trust department, has actual knowledge of the event or until the trustee receives written notice of the event at its corporate trust office, and the notice refers to

the debt securities generally, us or the indenture. (Section 501)

If an event of default for a series of debt securities occurs and is continuing, either the trustee or the holders of at least 25% in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series may declare the principal amount of all the debt securities of that series due and immediately payable. In order to declare the principal amount of that series of debt securities due and immediately payable, the trustee or the holders must deliver a notice that satisfies the requirements of the indenture. Upon a declaration by the trustee or the holders, we will be obligated to pay the principal amount of the series of debt securities.

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The right described in the preceding paragraph does not apply if:

an event of default described in the fifth bullet point above occurs, or

an event of default described in the fourth or sixth bullet points above that applies to all outstanding debt securities occurs.

If any of these events of default occurs and is continuing, either the trustee or holders of at least 25% in principal amount of all of the debt securities then outstanding, treated as one class, may declare the principal amount of all of the debt securities then outstanding to be due and payable immediately. In order to declare the principal amount of the debt securities due and immediately payable, the trustee or the holders must deliver a notice that satisfies the requirements of the indenture. Upon a declaration by the trustee or the holders, we will be obligated to pay the principal amount of the debt securities.

However, after any declaration of acceleration of a series of debt securities, but before a judgment or decree for payment has been obtained, the holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series may rescind and annul the declaration of acceleration if:

we have paid or deposited with the trustee a sum sufficient to pay:

all overdue interest,

the principal and premium, if any, due otherwise than by the declaration of acceleration and any interest on such amounts,

any interest on overdue interest, to the extent legally permitted, and

all amounts due to the trustee under the indenture, and

all events of default with respect to that series of debt securities, other than the nonpayment of the principal which became due solely by virtue of the declaration of acceleration, have been cured or waived. (Section 502)

If an event of default occurs and is continuing, the trustee will generally have no obligation to exercise any of its rights or powers under the indenture at the request or direction of any of the holders, unless the holders offer reasonable indemnity to the trustee. (Section 603) The holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series will generally have the right to direct the time, method and place of conducting any proceeding for any remedy available to the trustee or exercising any trust or power conferred on the trustee for the debt securities of that series, provided that:

the direction is not in conflict with any law or the indenture,

the trustee may take any other action it deems proper which is not inconsistent with the direction, and

the trustee will generally have the right to decline to follow the direction if an officer of the trustee determines, in good faith, that the proceeding would involve the trustee in personal liability or would otherwise be contrary to applicable law. (Section 512)

A holder of a debt security of any series may only pursue a remedy under the indenture if:



the holder gives the trustee written notice of a continuing event of default for that series,

holders of at least 25% in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series make a written request to the trustee to institute proceedings with respect to the event of default,

the holders offer reasonable indemnity to the trustee,

the trustee fails to pursue that remedy within 60 days after receipt of the notice, request and offer of indemnity, and

during that 60-day period, the holders of a majority in principal amount of the debt securities of that series do not give the trustee a direction inconsistent with the request. (Section 507)

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However, these limitations do not apply to a suit by a holder of a debt security demanding payment of the principal, premium, if any, or interest on a debt security on or after the date the payment is due. (Section 508)

We will be required to furnish to the trustee annually a statement by some of our officers regarding our performance or observance of any of the terms of the indenture and specifying all of our known defaults, if any. (Section 1004)

**Modification and Waiver**

We may enter into one or more supplemental indentures with the trustee without the consent of the holders of the debt securities in order to:

evidence the succession of another corporation to us, or successive successions and the assumption of our covenants, agreements and obligations by a successor,

add to our covenants for the benefit of the holders of any series of debt securities or to surrender any of our rights or powers,

add events of default for any series of debt securities,

add to or change any provisions of the indenture to the extent necessary to issue debt securities in bearer form,

add to, change or eliminate any provision of the indenture applying to one or more series of debt securities, provided that if such action adversely affects the interests of any holder of any series of debt securities, the addition, change or elimination will become effective with respect to that series only when no security of that series remains outstanding,

convey, transfer, assign, mortgage or pledge any property to or with the trustee or surrender any right or power conferred upon us by the indenture,

establish the form or terms of any series of debt securities,

provide for uncertificated securities in addition to certificated securities,

evidence and provide for successor trustees or add or change any provisions to the extent necessary to appoint a separate trustee or trustees for a specific series of debt securities,

correct any ambiguity, defect or inconsistency under the indenture, provided that such action does not adversely affect the interests of the holders of any series of debt securities,

supplement any provisions of the indenture necessary to defease and discharge any series of debt securities, provided that such action does not adversely affect the interests of the holders of any series of debt securities,

comply with the rules or regulations of any securities exchange or automated quotation system on which any debt securities are listed or traded, or

add, change or eliminate any provisions of the indenture in accordance with any amendments to the Trust Indenture Act of 1939, provided that the action does not adversely affect the rights or interests of any holder of debt securities. (Section 901)

We may enter into one or more supplemental indentures with the trustee in order to add to, change or eliminate provisions of the indenture or to modify the rights of the holders of one or more series of debt securities if we obtain the consent of the holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of each series affected by the supplemental indenture, treated as one class. However, without the

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consent of the holders of each outstanding debt security affected by the supplemental indenture, we may not enter into a supplemental indenture that:

changes the stated maturity of the principal of, or any installment of principal of or interest on, any debt security, except to the extent permitted by the indenture,

reduces the principal amount of, or any premium or interest on, any debt security,

reduces the amount of principal of an original issue discount security or any other debt security payable upon acceleration of the maturity thereof,

changes the place or currency of payment of principal, premium, if any, or interest,

impairs the right to institute suit for the enforcement of any payment on any debt security,

reduces the percentage in principal amount of outstanding debt securities of any series, the consent of whose holders is required for modification of the indenture, for waiver of compliance with certain provisions of the indenture or for waiver of certain defaults,

makes certain modifications to the provisions for modification of the indenture and for certain waivers, except to increase the principal amount of debt securities necessary to consent to any such change,

makes any change that adversely affects the right to convert or exchange any debt security or decreases the conversion or exchange rate or increases the conversion price of any convertible or exchangeable debt security, or

changes the terms and conditions pursuant to which any series of debt securities is secured in a manner adverse to the holders of the debt securities. (Section 902)

Holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series may waive past defaults or noncompliance with restrictive provisions of the indenture. However, such holders of a majority in principal amount may not waive, and consequently, the consent of holders of each outstanding debt security of a series would be required to:

waive any default in the payment of principal, premium, if any, or interest, or

waive any covenants and provisions of the indenture that may not be amended without the consent of the holder of each outstanding debt security of the series affected. (Sections 513 and 1006)

In order to determine whether the holders of the requisite principal amount of the outstanding debt securities have taken an action under the indenture as of a specified date:

the principal amount of an original issue discount security that will be deemed to be outstanding will be the amount of the principal that would be due and payable as of that date upon acceleration of the maturity to that date,

if, as of that date, the principal amount payable at the stated maturity of a debt security is not determinable, for example, because it is based on an index, the principal amount of the debt security deemed to be outstanding as of that date will be an amount determined in the manner prescribed for the debt security,

the principal amount of a debt security denominated in one or more foreign currencies or currency units that will be deemed to be outstanding will be the \$U.S. equivalent, determined as of that date in the manner prescribed for the debt security, of the principal amount of the debt security or, in the case of a debt security described in the two preceding bullet points, of the amount described above, and

debt securities owned by us or any other obligor upon the debt securities or any of our or their affiliates will be disregarded and deemed not to be outstanding.

An original issue discount security means a debt security issued under the indenture which provides for an amount less than the principal amount thereof to be due and payable upon a declaration of acceleration of maturity. Some debt securities, including those for the payment or redemption of which money has been

## **Table of Contents**

deposited or set aside in trust for the holders and those that have been fully defeased pursuant to Section 1402 of the indenture, will not be deemed to be outstanding. (Section 101)

We will generally be entitled to set any day as a record date for determining the holders of outstanding debt securities of any series entitled to give or take any direction, notice, consent, waiver or other action under the indenture. In limited circumstances, the trustee will be entitled to set a record date for action by holders of outstanding debt securities. If a record date is set for any action to be taken by holders of a particular series, the action may be taken only by persons who are holders of outstanding debt securities of that series on the record date. To be effective, the action must be taken by holders of the requisite principal amount of debt securities within a specified period following the record date. For any particular record date, this period will be 180 days or such shorter period as we may specify, or the trustee may specify, if it set the record date. This period may be shortened or lengthened by not more than 180 days. (Section 104)

## **Defeasance**

When we use the term defeasance, we mean discharge from some or all of our obligations under the indenture. Unless we inform you otherwise in the prospectus supplement, if we deposit with the trustee funds or government securities sufficient to make payments on the debt securities of a series on the dates those payments are due and payable, then, at our option, either of the following will occur:

we will be discharged from our obligations with respect to the debt securities of that series ( legal defeasance ), or

we will no longer have any obligation to comply with the restrictive covenants under the indenture, and the related events of default will no longer apply to us, but some of our other obligations under the indenture and the debt securities of that series, including our obligation to make payments on those debt securities, will survive.

If we effect legal defeasance of a series of debt securities, the holders of the debt securities of the series affected will not be entitled to the benefits of the indenture, except for our obligations to:

register the transfer or exchange of debt securities,

replace mutilated, destroyed, lost or stolen debt securities, and

maintain paying agencies and hold moneys for payment in trust.

Unless we inform you otherwise in the prospectus supplement, we will be required to deliver to the trustee an opinion of counsel that the deposit and related defeasance would not cause the holders of the debt securities to recognize gain or loss for federal income tax purposes and that the holders would be subject to federal income tax on the same amounts, in the same manner and at the same times as would have been the case if the deposit and related defeasance had not occurred. If we elect legal defeasance, that opinion of counsel must be based upon a ruling from the United States Internal Revenue Service or a change in law to that effect. (Sections 1401, 1402, 1403 and 1404)

## **Satisfaction And Discharge**

We may discharge our obligations under the indenture while debt securities remain outstanding if (1) all outstanding debt securities issued under the indenture have become due and payable, (2) all outstanding debt securities issued under the indenture have or will become due and payable at their scheduled maturity within one year or (3) all

outstanding debt securities issued under the indenture are scheduled for redemption in one year, and in each case, we have deposited with the trustee an amount sufficient to pay and discharge all outstanding debt securities issued under the indenture on the date of their scheduled maturity or the scheduled date of redemption and we have paid all other sums payable under the Indenture. (Section 401)

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### **Notices**

Holders will receive notices by mail at their addresses as they appear in the security register. (Section 106)

### **Title**

We may treat the person in whose name a debt security is registered on the applicable record date as the owner of the debt security for all purposes, whether or not it is overdue. (Section 309)

### **Governing Law**

New York law will govern the indenture and the debt securities. (Section 112)

### **Regarding the Trustee**

The Bank of New York Mellon Trust Company, National Association, successor to JPMorgan Chase Bank, National Association, is the trustee, security registrar and paying agent under the indenture. As of June 30, 2010, the trustee served as trustee for approximately \$2.7 billion aggregate principal amount of our debt securities. In addition, the trustee served as trustee or fiscal agent for debt securities of our affiliates aggregating approximately \$6.0 billion as of June 30, 2010.

Our affiliates maintain brokerage relationships with the trustee and its affiliates.

If an event of default occurs under the indenture and is continuing, the trustee will be required to use the degree of care and skill of a prudent person in the conduct of that person's own affairs. The trustee will become obligated to exercise any of its powers under the indenture at the request of any of the holders of any debt securities issued under the indenture only after those holders have offered the trustee indemnity satisfactory to it.

If the trustee becomes one of our creditors, its rights to obtain payment of claims in specified circumstances, or to realize for its own account on certain property received in respect of any such claim as security or otherwise will be limited under the terms of the indenture pursuant to the provisions of the Trust Indenture Act. (Section 613) The trustee may engage in certain other transactions; however, if the trustee acquires any conflicting interest (within the meaning specified under the Trust Indenture Act), it will be required to eliminate the conflict or resign. (Section 608)

## **PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION**

We may sell the offered debt securities in and outside the United States:

- through underwriters or dealers,
- directly to purchasers, including our affiliates,
- through agents, or
- through a combination of any of these methods.

The prospectus supplement will include the following information:

- the terms of the offering,



the names of any underwriters or agents,

the name or names of any managing underwriter or underwriters,

the purchase price of the debt securities,

the net proceeds to us from the sale of the debt securities,

any delayed delivery arrangements,

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any underwriting discounts, commissions and other items constituting underwriters' compensation,  
any initial public offering price,  
any discounts or concessions allowed or reallocated or paid to dealers, and  
any commissions paid to agents.

### **Sale Through Underwriters or Dealers**

If we use underwriters in the sale, the underwriters will acquire the debt securities for their own account. The underwriters may resell the debt securities from time to time in one or more transactions, including negotiated transactions, at a fixed public offering price or at varying prices determined at the time of sale. Underwriters may offer debt securities to the public either through underwriting syndicates represented by one or more managing underwriters or directly by one or more firms acting as underwriters. Unless we inform you otherwise in the prospectus supplement, the obligations of the underwriters to purchase the debt securities will be subject to certain conditions, and the underwriters will be obligated to purchase all the offered debt securities if they purchase any of them. The underwriters may change from time to time any initial public offering price and any discounts or concessions allowed or reallocated or paid to dealers.

During and after an offering through underwriters, the underwriters may purchase and sell the debt securities in the open market. These transactions may include overallotment and stabilizing transactions and purchases to cover syndicate short positions created in connection with the offering. The underwriters also may impose a penalty bid, which means that selling concessions allowed to syndicate members or other broker-dealers for the offered debt securities sold for their account may be reclaimed by the syndicate if the offered debt securities are repurchased by the syndicate in stabilizing or covering transactions. These activities may stabilize, maintain or otherwise affect the market price of the offered debt securities, which may be higher than the price that might otherwise prevail in the open market. If commenced, the underwriters may discontinue these activities at any time.

If we use dealers in the sale of debt securities, we may sell the debt securities to them as principals. They may then resell those debt securities to the public at varying prices determined by the dealers at the time of resale. The dealers participating in any sale of the debt securities may be deemed to be underwriters within the meaning of the Securities Act of 1933 with respect to any sale of these securities. We will include in the prospectus supplement the names of the dealers and the terms of the transaction.

### **Direct Sales and Sales Through Agents**

We may sell the debt securities directly. In that event, no underwriters or agents would be involved. We may also sell the debt securities through agents we designate from time to time. In the prospectus supplement, we will name any agent involved in the offer or sale of the offered debt securities, and we will describe any commissions payable by us to the agent. Unless we inform you otherwise in the prospectus supplement, any agent will agree to use its reasonable best efforts to solicit purchases for the period of its appointment.

We may sell the debt securities directly to institutional investors or others who may be deemed to be underwriters within the meaning of the Securities Act of 1933 with respect to any sale of those debt securities. We will describe the terms of any such sales in the prospectus supplement.

### **Delayed Delivery Contracts**

If we so indicate in the prospectus supplement, we may authorize agents, underwriters or dealers to solicit offers from certain types of institutions to purchase debt securities from us at the public offering price under delayed delivery contracts. These contracts would provide for payment and delivery on a specified date in the future. The contracts would be subject only to those conditions described in the prospectus supplement. The prospectus supplement will describe the commission payable for solicitation of those contracts.

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### **Remarketing**

We may offer and sell any of the offered debt securities in connection with a remarketing upon their purchase, in accordance with a redemption or repayment by their terms or otherwise by one or more remarketing firms acting as principals for their own accounts or as our agents. We will identify any remarketing firm, the terms of any remarketing agreement and the compensation to be paid to the remarketing firm in the prospectus supplement. Remarketing firms may be deemed underwriters under the Securities Act of 1933.

### **Derivative Transactions**

We may enter into derivative transactions with third parties, or sell securities not covered by this prospectus to third parties in privately negotiated transactions. If the applicable prospectus supplement indicates, in connection with those derivatives, the third parties may sell debt securities covered by this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement, including in short sale transactions. If so, the third parties may use securities pledged by us or borrowed from us or others to settle those sales or to close out any related open borrowings of securities, and may use securities received from us in settlement of those derivatives to close out any related open borrowings of securities. The third parties in these sale transactions will be underwriters and will be identified in the applicable prospectus supplement or in a post-effective amendment to the registration statement of which this prospectus forms a part.

### **General Information**

We may have agreements with the agents, dealers and underwriters to indemnify them against certain civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act of 1933, or to contribute with respect to payments that the agents, dealers or underwriters may be required to make. Agents, dealers and underwriters may be customers of, engage in transactions with or perform services for us in the ordinary course of their businesses.

Each series of offered debt securities will be a new issue and will have no established trading market. We may elect to list any series of offered debt securities on an exchange, but we are not obligated to do so. It is possible that one or more underwriters may make a market in a series of offered debt securities. However, they will not be obligated to do so and may discontinue market making at any time without notice. We cannot assure you that a liquid trading market for any of our offered debt securities will develop.

## **LEGAL MATTERS**

The validity of the debt securities described in this prospectus will be passed upon for us by Baker Botts L.L.P., Houston, Texas. Scott E. Rozzell, Esq., our Executive Vice President, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary, or Rufus S. Scott, our Senior Vice President, Deputy General Counsel and Assistant Corporate Secretary, may pass upon other legal matters for us. Each of Messrs. Rozzell and Scott is the beneficial owner of less than 1% of CenterPoint Energy's common stock. Any underwriters will be advised regarding issues relating to any offering by Dewey & LeBoeuf LLP.

## **EXPERTS**

The consolidated financial statements and the related consolidated financial statement schedule, incorporated in this document by reference from our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2009, have been audited by Deloitte & Touche LLP, an independent registered public accounting firm, as stated in their reports, which are incorporated herein by reference. Such consolidated financial statements and consolidated financial statement schedule have been so incorporated in reliance upon the reports of such firm given upon their authority as experts in accounting and auditing.



**Table of Contents****PART II****INFORMATION NOT REQUIRED IN PROSPECTUS****Item 14. *Other Expenses of Issuance and Distribution.***

The following are the expenses in connection with the issuance and distribution of the securities being registered, other than underwriting fees and commissions.

|   |      |
|---|------|
| Securities and Exchange Commission registration fee   | \$ * |
| Trustees and transfer agents fees and expenses        | +    |
| Printing and engraving fees and expenses              | +    |
| Accounting fees and expenses                          | +    |
| Legal fees  | +    |
| Rating agency fees                                    | +    |
| Miscellaneous (including Listing fees, if applicable) | +    |
| Total   | *    |

\* Omitted because the registration fee is being deferred pursuant to Rule 456(b) and Rule 457(r).

+ Estimated expenses are not presently known. The foregoing sets forth the general categories of expenses (other than underwriting discounts and commissions) that the registrants anticipate will be incurred in connection with the offering of securities under this Registration Statement. An estimate of the aggregate expenses in connection with the issuance and distribution of the securities being offered will be included in the applicable prospectus supplement.

**Item 15. *Indemnification of Directors and Officers.*****CenterPoint Energy, Inc.**

Title 1, Chapter 8 of the Texas Business Organizations Code ( TBOC ) and Article V of CenterPoint Energy s Amended and Restated Bylaws provide CenterPoint Energy with broad powers and authority to indemnify its directors and officers and to purchase and maintain insurance for such purposes. Pursuant to such statutory and Bylaw provisions, CenterPoint Energy has purchased insurance against certain costs of indemnification that may be incurred by it and by its officers and directors.

Additionally, Article IX of CenterPoint Energy s Restated Articles of Incorporation provides that no director of CenterPoint Energy is liable to CenterPoint Energy or its shareholders for monetary damages for any act or omission in the director s capacity as director, except as required by law as in effect from time to time. Currently, Section 7.001 of the TBOC requires that liability be imposed for the following actions: (i) any breach of such director s duty of loyalty to CenterPoint Energy or its shareholders, (ii) any act or omission not in good faith that constitutes a breach of duty of such director to CenterPoint Energy or that involves intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of law, (iii) a transaction from which such director received an improper benefit, regardless of whether or not the benefit resulted from an action taken within the scope of the director s duties or (iv) an act or omission for which the liability of a director is expressly provided for by statute.

Article IX also provides that any subsequent amendments to Texas statutes that further limit the liability of directors will inure to the benefit of the directors, without any further action by shareholders. Any repeal or modification of Article IX shall not adversely affect any right of protection of a director of CenterPoint Energy existing at the time of the repeal or modification.

**CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric, LLC**

The TBOC and Article VIII of CenterPoint Houston's Limited Liability Company Regulations provide CenterPoint Houston with broad powers and authority to indemnify its member, managers and officers and to

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purchase and maintain insurance for such purposes. Pursuant to such statutory and Limited Liability Company Regulation provisions, CenterPoint Houston has purchased insurance against certain costs of indemnification that may be incurred by it and by its member, manager and officers.

Additionally, Section 7.12 of CenterPoint Houston's Limited Liability Company Regulations provides that a manager of CenterPoint Houston is not liable to CenterPoint Houston or its member for monetary damages for breach of fiduciary duty as a manager, except that Section 7.12 does not eliminate or limit the liability of a manager for any acts or omissions that involve intentional misconduct, fraud or a knowing violation of law or for a distribution in violation of Texas law as a result of the willful or grossly negligent act or omission of the manager.

Section 7.12 also provides that any subsequent amendments to Texas statutes that further limit the liability of managers will inure to the benefit of the managers. Any repeal or modification of Section 7.12 shall not adversely affect any right of protection of a manager of CenterPoint Houston existing at the time of the repeal or modification.

**CenterPoint Energy Resources Corp.**

Section 145 of the General Corporation Law of Delaware (the "DGCL") gives corporations the power to indemnify officers and directors under certain circumstances.

Article V of the By-Laws of CERC Corp. provides for indemnification of officers and directors to the extent permitted by the DGCL. CERC Corp. also has policies insuring its officers and directors against certain liabilities for action taken in such capacities, including liabilities under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended.

Article Ninth of CERC Corp.'s Certificate of Incorporation adopted the provision of Delaware law limiting or eliminating the potential monetary liability of directors to CERC Corp. or its stockholders for breaches of a director's fiduciary duty of care. However, the provision does not limit or eliminate the liability of a director for disloyalty to CERC Corp. or its stockholders, failing to act in good faith, engaging in intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of the law, obtaining an improper personal benefit or paying a dividend or approving a stock repurchase that was illegal under section 174 of the DGCL.

Article Ninth of CERC Corp.'s Certificate of Incorporation also provides that if the DGCL is subsequently amended to authorize further limitation or elimination of the liability of directors, such subsequent limitation or elimination of director's liability will be automatically implemented without further stockholder action. Furthermore, repeal or modification of the terms of Article Ninth will not adversely affect any right or protection of a director existing at the time of such repeal or modification.

See Item 17. Undertakings for a description of the Commission's position regarding such indemnification provisions.



**Table of Contents****Item 16. Exhibits.**

The following is a list of all exhibits filed as a part of this Registration Statement on Form S-3, including those incorporated herein by reference. CenterPoint Energy, CenterPoint Houston or CERC Corp., as applicable, will file as an exhibit to a Current Report on Form 8 K (i) any underwriting, remarketing or agency agreement relating to securities offered hereby, (ii) any additional instruments setting forth the terms of any debt securities, including mortgage bonds, preferred stock, stock purchase contracts or equity units, (iii) any additional required opinions of counsel with respect to legality of the securities offered hereby and (iv) any required opinion of counsel as to certain tax matters relative to securities offered hereby.

| <b>Exhibit Number</b> | <b>Registrant</b>   | <b>Document Description</b>  | <b>Report or Registration Statement</b>                                    | <b>Registration Number</b> | <b>Exhibit Reference</b> |
|-----------------------|---------------------|--|--|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 4.1*                  | CenterPoint Energy  | Restated Articles of Incorporation of CenterPoint Energy, Inc.   | Form 8-K of CenterPoint Energy, Inc. dated July 24, 2008                   | 1-31447                    | 3.2                      |
| 4.2*                  | CenterPoint Energy  | Amended and Restated Bylaws of CenterPoint Energy, Inc.  | Form 8-K of CenterPoint Energy, Inc. dated January 20, 2010                | 1-31447                    | 3.1                      |
| 4.3*                  | CenterPoint Energy  | Rights Agreement dated as of January 1, 2002 between CenterPoint Energy, Inc. and JPMorgan Chase Bank, as Rights Agent                                 | Form 10-K of CenterPoint Energy, Inc. for the year ended December 31, 2001 | 1-31447                    | 4.2                      |
| 4.4*                  | CenterPoint Energy  | Form of CenterPoint Energy, Inc. Stock Certificate   | Registration Statement on Form S-4 of CenterPoint Energy, Inc.             | 333-69502                  | 4.1                      |
| 4.5*                  | CenterPoint Energy  | Indenture, dated as of May 19, 2003, between CenterPoint Energy, Inc. and JPMorgan Chase Bank as trustee   | Form 8-K of CenterPoint Energy, Inc. dated May 19, 2003                    | 1-31447                    | 4.1                      |
| 4.6*                  | CenterPoint Energy  | Form of Junior Subordinated Indenture, between CenterPoint Energy, Inc. and The Bank of New York Mellon Trust Company, National Association as trustee | Form S-3 of CenterPoint Energy, Inc. filed on October 9, 2008              | 333-153916                 | 4.6                      |
| 4.7*                  | CenterPoint Houston | Articles of Conversion of Reliant Energy, Incorporated   | Form 8-K of CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric,                           | 1-3187                     | 3(a)                     |

|      |                     |   |   |        |      |
|------|---------------------|---|---|--------|------|
| 4.8* | CenterPoint Houston | Articles of Organization of CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric, LLC              | LLC dated August 31, 2002<br>Form 8-K of CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric, LLC dated August 31, 2002 | 1-3187 | 3(b) |
| 4.9* | CenterPoint Houston | Limited Liability Company Regulations of CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric, LLC | Form 8-K of CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric, LLC dated August 31, 2002                              | 1-3187 | 3(c) |

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| <b>Exhibit Number</b> | <b>Registrant</b>   | <b>Document Description</b>  | <b>Report or Registration Statement</b>                    | <b>Registration Number</b> | <b>Exhibit Reference</b> |
|-----------------------|---------------------|--|--|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 4.10*                 | CenterPoint Houston | General Mortgage Indenture, dated as of October 10, 2002, between CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric, LLC and JPMorgan Chase Bank as trustee  | Form 10-Q for the quarter ended September 30, 2002         | 1-3187                     | 4(j)(1)                  |
| 4.11*                 | CenterPoint Houston | Ninth Supplemental Indenture, dated November 12, 2002, to the General Mortgage Indenture, dated as of October 10, 2002, between CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric, LLC and JPMorgan Chase Bank as trustee    | Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2002             | 1-3187                     | 4(k)(10)                 |
| 4.12*                 | CenterPoint Houston | Twentieth Supplemental Indenture, dated December 9, 2008, to the General Mortgage Indenture, dated as of October 10, 2002, between CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric, LLC and JPMorgan Chase Bank as trustee | Form 8-K of CenterPoint Energy, Inc. dated January 9, 2009 | 1-3187                     | 4.2                      |
| 4.13*                 | CERC Corp.          | Certificate of Incorporation of Reliant Energy Resources Corp.   | Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 1997             | 1-3187                     | 3(a)(1)                  |
| 4.14*                 | CERC Corp.          | Certificate of Merger merging former NorAm Energy Corp. with and into HI Merger, Inc. dated August 6, 1997   | Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 1997             | 1-3187                     | 3(a)(2)                  |
| 4.15*                 | CERC Corp.          | Certificate of Amendment changing the name to Reliant Energy Resources Corp.   | Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 1998             | 1-3187                     | 3(a)(3)                  |
| 4.16*                 | CERC Corp.          | Certificate of Amendment changing the name to CenterPoint Energy Resources Corp.   | Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2003              | 1-13265                    | 3(a)(4)                  |
| 4.17*                 | CERC Corp.          |  |  | 1-3187                     | 3(b)                     |

|       |  |   |                                 |             |
|-------|--|---|---------------------------------|-------------|
|       | Bylaws of Reliant Energy Resources Corp. | Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 1997  |                                 |             |
| 4.18* | CERC Corp.                               | Indenture, dated as of February 1, 1998, between Reliant Energy Resources Corp. and Chase Bank of Texas, National Association, as Trustee | Form 8-K dated February 5, 1998 | 1-13265 4.1 |

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| <b>Exhibit Number</b> | <b>Registrant</b>   | <b>Document Description</b>  | <b>Report or Registration Statement</b>        | <b>Registration Number</b> | <b>Exhibit Reference</b> |
|-----------------------|---|--|--|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 5.1                   | CenterPoint Energy<br>CenterPoint Houston<br>CERC Corp.     | Opinion of Baker Botts<br>L.L.P.   |  |                            |                          |
| 12.1*                 | CenterPoint Energy  | Computation of ratios of earnings to fixed charges for the twelve-month periods ended December 31, 2009, 2008, 2007, 2006 and 2005 | Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2009 | 1-31447                    | 12                       |
| 12.2*                 | CenterPoint Energy  | Computation of ratios of earnings to fixed charges for the six-month period ended June 30, 2010                                    | Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2010  | 1-31447                    | 12                       |
| 12.3*                 | CenterPoint Houston   | Computation of ratios of earnings to fixed charges for the twelve-month periods ended December 31, 2009, 2008, 2007, 2006 and 2005 | Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2009 | 1-3187                     | 12                       |
| 12.4*                 | CenterPoint Houston   | Computation of ratios of earnings to fixed charges for the six-month period ended June 30, 2010                                    | Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2010  | 1-3187                     | 12                       |
| 12.5*                 | CERC Corp.  | Computation of ratios of earnings to fixed charges for the twelve-month periods ended December 31, 2009, 2008, 2007, 2006 and 2005 | Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2009 | 1-13265                    | 12                       |
| 12.6*                 | CERC Corp.  | Computation of ratios of earnings to fixed charges for the six-month period ended June 30, 2010                                    | Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2010  | 1-13265                    | 12                       |
| 23.1                  | CenterPoint Energy  | Consent of Deloitte & Touche LLP   |  |                            |                          |
| 23.2                  | CenterPoint Houston   | Consent of Deloitte & Touche LLP   |  |                            |                          |
| 23.3                  | CERC Corp.  | Consent of Deloitte & Touche LLP   |  |                            |                          |
| 23.4                  | CenterPoint Energy<br>CenterPoint Houston<br><br>CERC Corp. | Consent of Baker Botts L.L.P. (included in Exhibit 5.1)  |  |                            |                          |

|      |                    |   |
|------|--------------------|---|
| 24.1 | CenterPoint Energy | Powers of Attorney<br>(included on the signature<br>page of this registration<br>statement) |
|------|--------------------|---|

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| <b>Exhibit Number</b> | <b>Registrant</b>   | <b>Document Description</b>   | <b>Report or Registration Statement</b> | <b>Registration Number</b> | <b>Exhibit Reference</b> |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---|---|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 24.2                  | CenterPoint Houston | Powers of Attorney (included on the signature page of this registration statement)  |   |                            |                          |
| 24.3                  | CERC Corp.          | Powers of Attorney (included on the signature page of this registration statement)  |   |                            |                          |
| 25.1                  | CenterPoint Energy  | Statement of Eligibility and Qualification under the Trust Indenture Act of 1939 of the Trustee under the Indenture and the Junior Subordinated Indenture on Form T-1 |   |                            |                          |
| 25.2                  | CenterPoint Houston | Statement of Eligibility and Qualification under the Trust Indenture Act of 1939 of the Trustee under the General Mortgage Indenture on Form T-1                      |   |                            |                          |
| 25.3                  | CERC Corp.          | Statement of Eligibility and Qualification under the Trust Indenture Act of 1939 of the Trustee under the Indenture on Form T-1                                       |   |                            |                          |

\* Incorporated herein by reference as indicated.

**Item 17. Undertakings.**

Each of the undersigned registrants hereby undertakes:

(1) to file, during any period in which offers or sales are being made, a post-effective amendment to this registration statement:

(i) to include any prospectus required by section 10(a)(3) of the Securities Act of 1933;

(ii) to reflect in the prospectus any facts or events arising after the effective date of the registration statement (or the most recent post-effective amendment thereof) which, individually or in the aggregate, represent a fundamental change in the information set forth in the registration statement. Notwithstanding the foregoing, any increase or decrease in volume of securities offered (if the total dollar value of securities offered would not exceed that which was registered) and any deviation from the low or high end of the estimated maximum offering range may be reflected in

the form of prospectus filed with the Commission pursuant to Rule 424(b) if, in the aggregate, the changes in volume and price represent no more than a 20% change in the maximum aggregate offering price set forth in the Calculation of Registration Fee table in the effective registration statement; and

(iii) to include any material information with respect to the plan of distribution not previously disclosed in the registration statement or any material change to such information in the registration statement;

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*provided, however*, that paragraphs (1)(i), (1)(ii) and (1)(iii) do not apply if the information required to be included in a post-effective amendment by those paragraphs is contained in periodic reports filed with or furnished to the Commission by such registrant pursuant to section 13 or section 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 that are incorporated by reference in the registration statement, or contained in a form of prospectus filed pursuant to Rule 424(b) that is part of the registration statement.

(2) that, for the purpose of determining any liability under the Securities Act of 1933, each such post-effective amendment shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof.

(3) to remove from registration by means of a post-effective amendment any of the securities being registered which remain unsold at the termination of the offering.

(4) that, for purposes of determining liability under the Securities Act of 1933 to any purchaser:

(A) each prospectus filed by such registrant pursuant to Rule 424(b)(3) shall be deemed to be part of the registration statement as of the date the filed prospectus was deemed part of and included in the registration statement; and

(B) each prospectus required to be filed pursuant to Rule 424(b)(2), (b)(5) or (b)(7) as part of a registration statement in reliance on Rule 430B relating to an offering made pursuant to Rule 415(a)(1)(i), (vii) or (x) for the purpose of providing the information required by Section 10(a) of the Securities Act of 1933 shall be deemed to be part of and included in the registration statement as of the earlier date such form of prospectus is first used after effectiveness or the date of the first contract of sale of securities in the offering described in the prospectus. As provided in Rule 430B, for liability purposes of the issuer and any person that is at that date an underwriter, such date shall be deemed to be a new effective date of the registration statement relating to the securities in the registration statement to which the prospectus relates, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof. Provided, however, that no statement made in a registration statement or prospectus that is part of the registration statement or made in a document incorporated or deemed incorporated by reference into the registration statement or prospectus that is part of the registration statement will, as to a purchaser with a time of contract of sale prior to such effective date, supersede or modify any statement that was made in the registration statement or prospectus that was part of the registration statement or made in any such document immediately prior to such effective date;

(5) that, for the purpose of determining liability of such registrant under the Securities Act of 1933 to any purchaser in the initial distribution of the securities, such undersigned registrant undertakes that in a primary offering of securities of such undersigned registrant pursuant to this registration statement, regardless of the underwriting method used to sell the securities to the purchaser, if the securities are offered or sold to such purchaser by means of any of the following communications, such undersigned registrant will be a seller to the purchaser and will be considered to offer or sell such securities to such purchaser:

(i) any preliminary prospectus or prospectus of such undersigned registrant relating to the offering required to be filed pursuant to Rule 424;

(ii) any free writing prospectus relating to the offering prepared by or on behalf of such undersigned registrant or used or referred to by such undersigned registrant;

(iii) the portion of any other free writing prospectus relating to the offering containing material information about such undersigned registrant or its securities provided by or on behalf of such undersigned registrant; and

(iv) any other communication that is an offer in the offering made by such undersigned registrant to the purchaser.

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Each undersigned registrant hereby undertakes that, for purposes of determining any liability under the Securities Act of 1933, each filing of such registrant's annual report pursuant to Section 13(a) or Section 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 that is incorporated by reference in the registration statement shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof.

Insofar as indemnification for liabilities arising under the Securities Act of 1933 may be permitted to directors, officers and controlling persons of such registrant pursuant to the provisions set forth in Item 15, or otherwise, each such registrant has been advised that in the opinion of the Securities and Exchange Commission such indemnification is against public policy as expressed in the Act and is, therefore, unenforceable. In the event that a claim for indemnification against such liabilities (other than the payment by such registrant of expenses incurred or paid by a director, officer or controlling person of such registrant in the successful defense of any action, suit or proceeding) is asserted by such director, officer or controlling person in connection with the securities being registered, such registrant will, unless in the opinion of its counsel the matter has been settled by controlling precedent, submit to a court of appropriate jurisdiction the question whether such indemnification by it is against public policy as expressed in the Act and will be governed by the final adjudication of such issue.

**Table of Contents****SIGNATURES**

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, the registrant certifies that it has reasonable grounds to believe that it meets all of the requirements for filing on Form S-3 and has duly caused this Registration Statement to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereunto duly authorized in the City of Houston, State of Texas, on September 30, 2010.

CENTERPOINT ENERGY, INC.  
(registrant)

By: /s/ David M. McClanahan

Name: David M. McClanahan

Title: President and Chief Executive Officer

**KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS**, that each person whose signature appears below constitutes and appoints Gary L. Whitlock, David M. McClanahan and Rufus S. Scott, and each of them severally, his or her true and lawful attorney or attorneys-in-fact and agents, with full power to act with or without the others and with full power of substitution and resubstitution, to execute in his name, place and stead, in any and all capacities, any or all amendments (including pre-effective and post-effective amendments) to this Registration Statement and any registration statement for the same offering filed pursuant to Rule 462 under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, and to file the same, with all exhibits thereto, and other documents in connection therewith, with the Securities and Exchange Commission, granting unto said attorneys-in-fact and agents and each of them full power and authority, to do and perform in the name and on behalf of the undersigned, in any and all capacities, each and every act and thing necessary or desirable to be done in and about the premises, to all intents and purposes and as fully as they might or could do in person, hereby ratifying, approving and confirming all that said attorneys-in-fact and agents or their substitutes may lawfully do or cause to be done by virtue hereof.

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, this registration statement has been signed by the following persons in the capacities and on the dates indicated.

| <b>Signature</b>                                 | <b>Title</b>   | <b>Date</b>        |
|--|--|--------------------|
| /s/ David M. McClanahan<br>David M. McClanahan   | President, Chief Executive Officer and<br>Director<br>(Principal Executive Officer)      | September 30, 2010 |
| /s/ Gary L. Whitlock<br>Gary L. Whitlock         | Executive Vice President and Chief<br>Financial Officer<br>(Principal Financial Officer) | September 30, 2010 |
| /s/ Walter L. Fitzgerald<br>Walter L. Fitzgerald | Senior Vice President and Chief<br>Accounting Officer<br>(Principal Accounting Officer)  | September 30, 2010 |
| /s/ Donald R. Campbell<br>Donald R. Campbell     | Director   | September 30, 2010 |

/s/ Milton Carroll

Director

September 30, 2010

Milton Carroll

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| <b>Signature</b>                                   | <b>Title</b> | <b>Date</b>        |
|--|--------------|--------------------|
| /s/ Derrill Cody<br>Derrill Cody                   | Director     | September 30, 2010 |
| /s/ O. Holcombe Crosswell<br>O. Holcombe Crosswell | Director     | September 30, 2010 |
| /s/ Michael P. Johnson<br>Michael P. Johnson       | Director     | September 30, 2010 |
| /s/ Janiece M. Longoria<br>Janiece M. Longoria     | Director     | September 30, 2010 |
| /s/ Thomas F. Madison<br>Thomas F. Madison         | Director     | September 30, 2010 |
| /s/ Robert T. O Connell<br>Robert T. O Connell     | Director     | September 30, 2010 |
| /s/ Susan O. Rheney<br>Susan O. Rheney             | Director     | September 30, 2010 |
| /s/ R. A. Walker<br>R. A. Walker                   | Director     | September 30, 2010 |
| /s/ Peter S. Wareing<br>Peter S. Wareing           | Director     | September 30, 2010 |
| /s/ Sherman M. Wolff<br>Sherman M. Wolff           | Director     | September 30, 2010 |

**Table of Contents****SIGNATURES**

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, the registrant certifies that it has reasonable grounds to believe that it meets all of the requirements for filing on Form S-3 and has duly caused this Registration Statement to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereunto duly authorized in the City of Houston, State of Texas, on September 30, 2010.

CENTERPOINT ENERGY HOUSTON ELECTRIC, LLC  
(registrant)

By: /s/ David M. McClanahan

Name: David M. McClanahan

Title: Manager

**KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS**, that each person whose signature appears below constitutes and appoints Gary L. Whitlock, David M. McClanahan and Rufus S. Scott, and each of them severally, his or her true and lawful attorney or attorneys-in-fact and agents, with full power to act with or without the others and with full power of substitution and resubstitution, to execute in his name, place and stead, in any and all capacities, any or all amendments (including pre-effective and post-effective amendments) to this Registration Statement and any registration statement for the same offering filed pursuant to Rule 462 under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, and to file the same, with all exhibits thereto, and other documents in connection therewith, with the Securities and Exchange Commission, granting unto said attorneys-in-fact and agents and each of them full power and authority, to do and perform in the name and on behalf of the undersigned, in any and all capacities, each and every act and thing necessary or desirable to be done in and about the premises, to all intents and purposes and as fully as they might or could do in person, hereby ratifying, approving and confirming all that said attorneys-in-fact and agents or their substitutes may lawfully do or cause to be done by virtue hereof.

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, this registration statement has been signed by the following persons in the capacities and on the dates indicated.

| <b>Signature</b>                                 | <b>Title</b>   | <b>Date</b>        |
|--|--|--------------------|
| /s/ David M. McClanahan<br>David M. McClanahan   | Manager and Chairman<br>(Principal Executive Officer and<br>Manager)                     | September 30, 2010 |
| /s/ Gary L. Whitlock<br>Gary L. Whitlock         | Executive Vice President and Chief<br>Financial Officer<br>(Principal Financial Officer) | September 30, 2010 |
| /s/ Walter L. Fitzgerald<br>Walter L. Fitzgerald | Senior Vice President and Chief<br>Accounting Officer<br>(Principal Accounting Officer)  | September 30, 2010 |

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**SIGNATURES**

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, the Registrant certifies that it has reasonable grounds to believe that it meets all of the requirements for filing on Form S-3 and has duly caused this Registration Statement to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereunto duly authorized, in the City of Houston, the State of Texas, on September 30, 2010.

CENTERPOINT ENERGY RESOURCES CORP.

By: /s/ David M. McClanahan

David M. McClanahan  
President and Chief Executive Officer

**POWER OF ATTORNEY**

**KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS**, that each person whose signature appears below constitutes and appoints David M. McClanahan, Scott E. Rozzell and Rufus S. Scott, and each of them severally, his true and lawful attorney or attorneys-in-fact and agents, with full power to act with or without the others and with full power of substitution and resubstitution, to execute in his name, place and stead, in any and all capacities, any or all amendments (including pre-effective and post-effective amendments) to this Registration Statement and any registration statement for the same offering filed pursuant to Rule 462 under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, and to file the same, with all exhibits thereto, and other documents in connection therewith, with the Securities and Exchange Commission, granting unto said attorneys-in-fact and agents and each of them full power and authority, to do and perform in the name and on behalf of the undersigned, in any and all capacities, each and every act and thing necessary or desirable to be done in and about the premises, to all intents and purposes and as fully as they might or could do in person, hereby ratifying, approving and confirming all that said attorneys-in-fact and agents or their substitutes may lawfully do or cause to be done by virtue hereof.

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, this Registration Statement has been signed by the following persons in the capacities and on the dates indicated.

| <b>Signature</b>         | <b>Title</b>  | <b>Date</b>        |
|--------------------------|---|--------------------|
| /s/ David M. McClanahan  | President, Chief Executive Officer and<br>Director      | September 30, 2010 |
| David M. McClanahan      | (Principal Executive Officer and Sole<br>Director)      |                    |
| /s/ Gary L. Whitlock     | Executive Vice President and Chief<br>Financial Officer | September 30, 2010 |
| Gary L. Whitlock         | (Principal Financial Officer)                           |                    |
| /s/ Walter L. Fitzgerald | Senior Vice President and Chief<br>Accounting Officer   | September 30, 2010 |
| Walter L. Fitzgerald     | (Principal Accounting Officer)                          |                    |





**Table of Contents****EXHIBIT INDEX**

CenterPoint Energy, CenterPoint Houston or CERC Corp., as applicable, will file as an exhibit to a Current Report on Form 8-K (i) any underwriting, remarketing or agency agreement relating to securities offered hereby, (ii) any additional instruments setting forth the terms of any debt securities, including mortgage bonds, preferred stock, stock purchase contracts or equity units, (iii) any additional required opinions of counsel with respect to legality of the securities offered hereby and (iv) any required opinion of counsel as to certain tax matters relative to securities offered hereby.

| <b>Exhibit Number</b> | <b>Registrant</b>   | <b>Document Description</b>  | <b>Report or Registration Statement</b>                                    | <b>Registration Number</b> | <b>Exhibit Reference</b> |
|-----------------------|---------------------|--|--|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 4.1*                  | CenterPoint Energy  | Restated Articles of Incorporation of CenterPoint Energy, Inc.   | Form 8-K of CenterPoint Energy, Inc. dated July 24, 2008                   | 1-31447                    | 3.2                      |
| 4.2*                  | CenterPoint Energy  | Amended and Restated Bylaws of CenterPoint Energy, Inc.  | Form 8-K of CenterPoint Energy, Inc. dated January 20, 2010                | 1-31447                    | 3.1                      |
| 4.3*                  | CenterPoint Energy  | Rights Agreement dated as of January 1, 2002 between CenterPoint Energy, Inc. and JPMorgan Chase Bank, as Rights Agent                                 | Form 10-K of CenterPoint Energy, Inc. for the year ended December 31, 2001 | 1-31447                    | 4.2                      |
| 4.4*                  | CenterPoint Energy  | Form of CenterPoint Energy, Inc. Stock Certificate   | Registration Statement on Form S-4 of CenterPoint Energy, Inc.             | 333-69502                  | 4.1                      |
| 4.5*                  | CenterPoint Energy  | Indenture, dated as of May 19, 2003, between CenterPoint Energy, Inc. and JPMorgan Chase Bank as trustee   | Form 8-K of CenterPoint Energy, Inc. dated May 19, 2003                    | 1-31447                    | 4.1                      |
| 4.6*                  | CenterPoint Energy  | Form of Junior Subordinated Indenture, between CenterPoint Energy, Inc. and The Bank of New York Mellon Trust Company, National Association as trustee | Form S-3 of CenterPoint Energy, Inc. filed on October 9, 2008              | 333-153916                 | 4.6                      |
| 4.7*                  | CenterPoint Houston | Articles of Conversion of Reliant Energy, Incorporated   | Form 8-K of CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric, LLC dated August          | 1-3187                     | 3(a)                     |

|       |                     |   |  |        |         |
|-------|---------------------|---|--|--------|---------|
| 4.8*  | CenterPoint Houston | Articles of Organization of CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric, LLC  | 31, 2002<br>Form 8-K of CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric, LLC dated August 31, 2002 | 1-3187 | 3(b)    |
| 4.9*  | CenterPoint Houston | Limited Liability Company Regulations of CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric, LLC   | Form 8-K of CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric, LLC dated August 31, 2002             | 1-3187 | 3(c)    |
| 4.10* | CenterPoint Houston | General Mortgage Indenture, dated as of October 10, 2002, between CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric, LLC and JPMorgan Chase Bank as trustee | Form 10-Q for the quarter ended September 30, 2002                                     | 1-3187 | 4(j)(1) |

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| <b>Exhibit Number</b> | <b>Registrant</b>   | <b>Document Description</b>  | <b>Report or Registration Statement</b>                    | <b>Registration Number</b> | <b>Exhibit Reference</b> |
|-----------------------|---------------------|--|--|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 4.11*                 | CenterPoint Houston | Ninth Supplemental Indenture, dated November 12, 2002, to the General Mortgage Indenture, dated as of October 10, 2002, between CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric, LLC and JPMorgan Chase Bank as trustee    | Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2002             | 1-3187                     | 4(k)(10)                 |
| 4.12*                 | CenterPoint Houston | Twentieth Supplemental Indenture, dated December 9, 2008, to the General Mortgage Indenture, dated as of October 10, 2002, between CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric, LLC and JPMorgan Chase Bank as trustee | Form 8-K of CenterPoint Energy, Inc. dated January 9, 2009 | 1-3187                     | 4.2                      |
| 4.13*                 | CERC Corp.          | Certificate of Incorporation of Reliant Energy Resources Corp.   | Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 1997             | 1-3187                     | 3(a)(1)                  |
| 4.14*                 | CERC Corp.          | Certificate of Merger merging former NorAm Energy Corp. with and into HI Merger, Inc. dated August 6, 1997   | Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 1997             | 1-3187                     | 3(a)(2)                  |
| 4.15*                 | CERC Corp.          | Certificate of Amendment changing the name to Reliant Energy Resources Corp.   | Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 1998             | 1-3187                     | 3(a)(3)                  |
| 4.16*                 | CERC Corp.          | Certificate of Amendment changing the name to CenterPoint Energy Resources Corp.   | Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2003              | 1-13265                    | 3(a)(4)                  |
| 4.17*                 | CERC Corp.          | Bylaws of Reliant Energy Resources Corp.   | Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 1997             | 1-3187                     | 3(b)                     |
| 4.18*                 | CERC Corp.          | Indenture, dated as of February 1, 1998, between Reliant Energy Resources Corp. and Chase Bank of Texas,   | Form 8-K dated February 5, 1998                            | 1-13265                    | 4.1                      |

|     |                                   |   |
|-----|-----------------------------------|---|
| 5.1 | CenterPoint Energy                | National Association, as<br>Trustee<br>Opinion of Baker Botts<br>L.L.P. |
|     | CenterPoint Houston<br>CERC Corp. |   |

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| <b>Exhibit Number</b> | <b>Registrant</b>   | <b>Document Description</b>  | <b>Report or Registration Statement</b>        | <b>Registration Number</b> | <b>Exhibit Reference</b> |
|-----------------------|---------------------|--|--|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 12.1*                 | CenterPoint Energy  | Computation of ratios of earnings to fixed charges for the twelve-month periods ended December 31, 2009, 2008, 2007, 2006 and 2005 | Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2009 | 1-31447                    | 12                       |
| 12.2*                 | CenterPoint Energy  | Computation of ratios of earnings to fixed charges for the six-month period ended June 30, 2010                                    | Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2010  | 1-31447                    | 12                       |
| 12.3*                 | CenterPoint Houston | Computation of ratios of earnings to fixed charges for the twelve-month periods ended December 31, 2009, 2008, 2007, 2006 and 2005 | Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2009 | 1-3187                     | 12                       |
| 12.4*                 | CenterPoint Houston | Computation of ratios of earnings to fixed charges for the six-month period ended June 30, 2010                                    | Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2010  | 1-3187                     | 12                       |
| 12.5*                 | CERC Corp.          | Computation of ratios of earnings to fixed charges for the twelve-month periods ended December 31, 2009, 2008, 2007, 2006 and 2005 | Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2009 | 1-13265                    | 12                       |
| 12.6*                 | CERC Corp.          | Computation of ratios of earnings to fixed charges for the six-month period ended June 30, 2010                                    | Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2010  | 1-13265                    | 12                       |
| 23.1                  | CenterPoint Energy  | Consent of Deloitte & Touche LLP   |  |                            |                          |
| 23.2                  | CenterPoint Houston | Consent of Deloitte & Touche LLP   |  |                            |                          |
| 23.3                  | CERC Corp.          | Consent of Deloitte & Touche LLP   |  |                            |                          |
| 23.4                  | CenterPoint Energy  | Consent of Baker Botts L.L.P. (included in Exhibit 5.1)  |  |                            |                          |
| 24.1                  | CenterPoint Energy  | Powers of Attorney (included on the signature page of this registration)   |  |                            |                          |

|      |                     |   |
|------|---------------------|---|
| 24.2 | CenterPoint Houston | statement)<br>Powers of Attorney<br>(included on the signature<br>page of this registration<br>statement) |
|------|---------------------|---|

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| <b>Exhibit Number</b> | <b>Registrant</b>   | <b>Document Description</b>   | <b>Report or Registration Statement</b> | <b>Registration Number</b> | <b>Exhibit Reference</b> |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---|---|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 24.3                  | CERC Corp.          | Powers of Attorney (included on the signature page of this registration statement)  |   |                            |                          |
| 25.1                  | CenterPoint Energy  | Statement of Eligibility and Qualification under the Trust Indenture Act of 1939 of the Trustee under the Indenture and the Junior Subordinated Indenture on Form T-1 |   |                            |                          |
| 25.2                  | CenterPoint Houston | Statement of Eligibility and Qualification under the Trust Indenture Act of 1939 of the Trustee under the General Mortgage Indenture on Form T-1                      |   |                            |                          |
| 25.3                  | CERC Corp.          | Statement of Eligibility and Qualification under the Trust Indenture Act of 1939 of the Trustee under the Indenture on Form T-1                                       |   |                            |                          |

\* Incorporated herein by reference as indicated.